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GERALDINE :
A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

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GERALDINE :
A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

BY
E. C. A.

VOL. I.

“ In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.”

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GERALDINE :

A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
 Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart ;
 Our eyes see all around in gloom, or glow
 Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.

KEEBLE'S *Christian Year*.

It was the hour of sunset, as from the oriel window of her apartment, Geraldine Carrington gazed o'er the broad lands of which she was heiress. The skies poured forth a flood of light and glory. The clouds reposing tranquilly above the distant hills, formed that mysterious combination of earth and sky, so emblematic of the soul of man ; and their reflected hues sparkling in the far-stretched bend of the river, seemed, in each ripple of that moving joy, to bring beneath the feet of her who sadly mused, messages of peace, and hope, and love ! For a time yielding to these sweet influences, Geraldine leaned yet farther from the casement to look around the utmost extent of country. To the

right lay the old red town of Elverton, its ruined castle and mound standing in dark fantastic outline against the brilliant sky ; and on the left reposed a deep and wooded valley, which presenting to the eye above the tops alone of the impervious trees, carried its rich carpeting between the hills, till all was lost in distance ; while in the foreground stood, immoveable in majesty, the stately trunks and rigid branches of many cedars.

Along this valley, on a footpath formed on the hill-side, and far above the trees, were fixed, at intervals of some hundred yards, high whitened poles, a yellow pendant fluttered at the top of each, and a few detached figures moved in the measured tread of sentinels along the seemingly prohibited path. Geraldine's wandering and abstracted gaze rested at length on this line of demarcation ; she started, sighed heavily, some deep emotion struggling in her breast. At this instant began the tolling of the city bell, when, wringing her hands, she sank upon her knees, and cried,—“ Oh my God ! I cannot die ! I cannot appear before thy throne in this bewilderment of mind. Oh ! cause me to know the truth, thou who art all truth. Spare me till this be clear—then take me to thyself ! And oh ! my God, calm thou this burning brain—send me some token of thy pity—give me back my wonted powers of mind, my courage, usefulness, my influence over others—these all came

from thee. Thou canst recal them all ; yet not now—not in the time of this thy public chastisement, when those who have looked up to me require them. Oh my God, I cannot cease to implore thee till thou hast answered me !”

As Geraldine half breathed, half pronounced, this supplication, there arose from the outskirts of the town a shout of mingled voices, and, as the sounds died murmuring away, another shout arose, another, and another, while a still small voice seemed to interpret them, “Geraldine, thy prayer is heard !”

The hours now passed unheeded on, and the deepening shades of night were flung around, before the silent commune of her heart was interrupted by a kindly hand resting on her shoulder, while in a tone of tender reproach, “Geraldine !” said her favourite friend, “Is it to be ever thus ? That vigorous mind, that noble heart, are they laid prostrate at the sight of danger, and are those ties of kindred and of friendship so forgotten, that self alone engrosses one who once lived but for others ! Ah ! dearest, when I look upon this change, I tremble for all human constancy, and think ‘truly this is a living death.’”

“And would you see me welcome danger—death——” said Geraldine, “give me back my ignorance, my prejudice, my blindness, and my peace. Let me think error, truth—delusion, cer-

tainty—and I will rush upon the tainted throng; will court the breath, will grasp the hand, of the first dying one, and hail the agonies which tear the frame, but free the soul to wing its flight above.”

“Your blindness and your peace, my Geraldine! Have you misled me then? Do you then love, and love unhappily?”

Geraldine smiled. “Katherine, your woman’s heart cannot suppose a feeling worthy to engross its depth and magnitude, but love, mere human love! But hear *my* heart declare its sentiments; that heart of which the waywardness, the passion, and the pride, you—you alone—have known in their full extent; hear me declare my present joy, that heaven forbade my early choice; that I have since escaped all ties that could have fettered me—that I am free to follow the truth whithersoever it may lead me.”

“Geraldine,” gravely replied her friend, “my mind being calmly settled in its early faith, would I not gladly attribute your excitement and distress to some other cause than that of bias towards a creed, which I must ever think most dark, deceitful, dangerous?”

The heavy tolling of the bell here interrupted them, and continued for some minutes, during which the friends remained silent, Geraldine being apparently engaged in prayer. On its ceasing she

remarked, "How sad it is to watch those empty forms, surviving all the intrinsic value which they once possessed. At each score of deaths within our hapless town, that solemn sound is heard—for what?—to warn the officials for mere official purposes, but no longer as the ancient 'passing bell,' when, far as the sounds could reach, the bended knee and fervent prayer obeyed the appeal to Christian charity, that souls which yet survived should supplicate for those departing hence. But Katherine," continued she with altered tone, and a joyousness of countenance and manner which, though once hers, she had of late but little shown, "Within these last few hours something has spoken peace to me—something connected with those popular shouts sent forth at sunset. How strange that having heard them, as you must have done distinctly, and repeatedly, two hours since, you have made no comment on them. This over-caution has confirmed my prophetic feeling, that those acclamations from an ignorant capricious mob, proceed from the same cause which, one short month ago, drew from them yells and execrations! Yes, Katherine, I see it is so! He who was hooted and pelted from the town, for simply preaching according to the doctrine of his Church, and the dictates of his conscience, he has now returned, because his enemies are dying of a fatal disease, and he can save or die with them. This

is the devoted being heaven has sent, to ‘speak peace to me,’ and to say, ‘Geraldine, thy prayer is heard.’” Here the first gush of tears she had known during many painful weeks, flowed irrepressibly, and relieved the tension and excitement of her mind.

“My dearest friend,” at length began Katherine, “you observed to me some months ago, that our minds understood each other, as though they were parts of a whole, and grateful am I to say, that I feel this equally with yourself, excepting in this unlucky instance: but here, I candidly own, I do not sympathize; and although I admit that nothing can have been more heroic than the conduct of this Catholic priest, or more apparently harsh than that of the leading people of the town, including, perhaps, some even of the clergy, yet I cannot but lament his return. All thinking and feeling persons regretted, as much as yourself, that the very characteristics of Protestantism, liberality and benevolence, should have been forgotten on this occasion, while an opposite conduct has proved as impolitic as it was ungenerous; for in these popular excitements there is always danger of a reaction; and it is exactly this reaction of feeling that has led this stupid mob, which I despise equally with yourself, to believe that their persecution of this Mr., or, as they call him, Father, Bernard, has drawn on them heaven’s vengeance

in the cholera, and that his recal will stay the contagion. Certain it is, if the report of servants may be trusted, that when he appeared at that gate, where the 'sanatory cordon' begins, and simply told the group who were loitering there, that he had returned to nurse and comfort their sick, the news quickly spread, a crowd collected, and Mr. Bernard was actually borne along, amid the shouts of the multitude, to the cholera hospital, where *his* advice and remedies are alone attended to. And now, Geraldine, if he but stop here, I willingly give him my meed of praise ; but surely your love of what is noble and disinterested can never influence you so far as to hope, that the awful delusions of the Romish Creed shall be once more held forth to the poor ignorant creatures who surround him, and who will now be weakened by terror and disease, and biassed by gratitude ?”

“ I believe,” said Geraldine abstractedly, “ that there is one point in which all these disputing Doctors agree, namely, that whatever may be the agony of the sufferers in this dreadful disease, they never lose their senses. These poor creatures will then be aware of Mr. Bernard’s presence, and of his spiritual care——how merciful !”

“ The best preparation for death must take place in the person’s own mind,” returned Katherine. “ This priest may comfort his own zealous heart with fancied converts in their last moments ;

he may administer to them all the rites prescribed by his Church, but do you seriously suppose, my dearest Geraldine, that these converts, even if sincere, will find more acceptance before God than those poor unassisted Protestants, who have been taught to rest solely on the merits of their Redeemer?"

"I will tell you what I seriously suppose," said Geraldine, "that *whatever* Christ has commanded we are to obey *implicitly*,—that we are not to conjecture, and reason, and make an allegory of it, or limit it entirely to the times of the Apostles; but we are to follow His commands to the very letter. So far, perhaps, you may think that we agree; but *I* begin to perceive that to our Lord's promises are attached certain conditions, while *you* think them wholly free and unconditional. Now, this confidence may be praiseworthy, it may be presumptuous, according as it is, or is not, conformable to Christ's intentions with respect to us."

"To what are you referring," inquired Katherine.

"Principally to that sacrament commanded by an inspired Apostle to be administered to the sick, which we Protestants have supposed beneficial only to the early Christians, and which you seem to think of no consequence at all."

"We cannot be long in doubt," replied Katherine, "while we have our Bibles."

“How can you say that,” cried Geraldine, “when we are differing at this very moment, not about the divine authority of the Sacred Book, but about its meaning! If it be impossible to doubt, while we have the Bible, why are we not agreed on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, commanded by Saint James, seeing that we both ardently desire to know the truth, both read incessantly in the Sacred Record, and both pray for the teaching of the spirit? Kate! Kate! tell me not that every Bible reader knows the truth: I am weary of this repeated but unsatisfactory answer; I have proved its hollowness. You know well the increased interest I took in religion three years ago,—the confidence I placed in the body of professing Christians, both in this neighbourhood and in London, and the conspicuous part which, from my zeal and my position here, I was induced to take in the various religious associations set on foot. What have become of those Bible readers!—those I most trusted! One has ceased to pray, and now can only praise, being certain of salvation; another has joined the Baptists, being dissatisfied with ‘Infant Baptism;’ and my former excellent governess, and still dear friend, has become infatuated by the doctrines of the ‘Miraculous Gifts;’ and has even been worked upon, by the frenzy of excitement, to utter those sounds which her party denominate the ‘Unknown Tongue!’

She has ceased to communicate with any of her former acquaintances, as being without the pale of the true Church, which has received baptism by the Holy Ghost; but she still yearns after me with the feelings of a sister. I have received several letters from her, and what think you is her constant entreaty? That I will read the Bible, and nothing but the Bible! pointing out to me the chapter hitherto so neglected during centuries, and reserved for these latter days, to be brought to light by the perfected Church! You know the chapter, Katherine; it is the fourteenth of Corinthians, in which there is certainly most distinct mention made by the Apostle of those very gifts of the Spirit, which, like the power of healing, the Irvingites contend would never have been lost but through want of faith. Now, Katherine, I have looked far too deeply into the cause of all this wild, unstable conduct, longer to suppose it the fault of the individuals who have so wandered astray. It is the *system* which I see is wrong,—the system of private interpretation of Scripture; and hence, however I may pity, I can never blame, its victims.”

“There has unfortunately,” said Katherine, “been too great license given of late to those who select detached passages of Scripture, and, by dwelling exclusively on them, give them undue weight over the other parts of the word of God.

But do not judge of the Protestant Church by a few of its unruly members, or throw up the Protestant's glorious privilege of taking his faith from the Bible alone, merely from the abuses which may occur from this liberty degenerating into license."

"I do not reason on the abuses merely, Katherine; I disapprove and am alarmed even at the *uses* of a principle, which I once admired as much as yourself. And why are your reasoning faculties so obscured as not to see, that, while we are surrounded by Bible Societies, and Branch Bible Societies, this county is torn by religious factions? That the Established Church is here already in a minority; and that, not seeing the madness of division at such a crisis, she keeps up the internal disunion between the Evangelical and the High Church,—the curate often preaching in opposition to the known sentiments of his rector, the parishes divided between them, each congregation contending that their favourite minister alone 'preaches the Gospel;' and then, to make confusion worse confounded, the women beginning to teach, and to decide, and to subdue by clamour, the authority of their appointed teachers! Now these refractory curates, and vociferous women, are all incessant Bible readers; and yet, even in their rebellion, they are not agreed."

"Rebellion," cried Katherine, smiling, "is a

strong term ; and now, Geraldine, confess to me, that the Church of England had fallen into a trance until these her own energetic children aroused her, and that what Wesley would have done for her, had he not been rudely thrust into dissent, the Evangelical body are achieving, namely, diffusing warmth and action throughout the inert mass. Why, then, be surprised and alarmed that some confusion and dissension take place during this process,—that pride and jealousy are irritated on the side of the higher powers, and that, on the Evangelical and reforming side, there is not always discovered zeal without innovation ?”

“Yes ! Katherine, I have considered all this,—and I have also felt myself under deep obligation to the party whose cause you espouse : it was from them I first learned to consider religion, not only as a duty, but as a delight, and felt a personal interest in all its glorious promises. Oh ! what a happy being I was then, when I fully trusted my spiritual guides with all the warmth and confiding affection of my character ! The awakening from this delusion has, indeed, been dreadful, and I bless God that my senses are still preserved.”

“And have you never consulted any Gospel minister, Geraldine, who, having remained steady to scriptural truth, would be able to prove to you that the individuals you refer to have been to

blame, through want of caution and humility; and that Protestantism is not to be pronounced a faulty system on account of these bad specimens?"

"I cannot consider these persons as bad specimens of the Protestant system, Katherine. They were, they are, constant and fervent in prayer, searching the Scriptures with all diligence, unremitting in deeds of charity and love. What right have I to charge these pious and devoted beings with want of humility? No! I pity, I love them through all their fearful wanderings; for, as I before said, I regard them as victims to the system of private interpretation of Scripture."

"Is Mr. Edmund Sinclair, your relative, and your parish minister, acquainted with the unsettled state of your mind?"

"But partially; for I feel that he could not help me. I know too well the state of my uncle Edmund's mind to expect relief. Piety, and tenderness, and sympathy, I have ever found, and should find again; but how could he give me that which he has not to give—stability?"

"Then, for Heaven's sake, Geraldine, consult some party, amongst the Protestants, whom you *can* trust; try even, if you will, the High Church body, which has stability enough, if forms, and articles, and liturgies, will content you. Better side with the worshippers of the 'Thirty-nine,' of

the Homilies, and of the Book of Common Prayer, than rush into all the fooleries of the Romish Church."

"I shall *rush* into nothing, Katherine; and could I hope to be satisfied with the old-fashioned Church of England, I would most gladly rest in her bosom. I have often wished to consult my eldest uncle, the Warden, who arrived here last week, and who is considered by his university as a standard authority in points of orthodoxy; but I have ever found the High Church party wanting in fervour, in zeal! I cannot but remember how dull I used to find religion when a child, and how interesting it is made to children in the Evangelical families."

"Yes," said Katherine, "I can never suppose that your ardent soul will be satisfied with the 'venerable Establishment!' That Episcopalian atmosphere has a soporific effect even upon *me*, as certain as it is indescribable. Still, as you are determined to put yourself under the thralldom of the 'commandments of men,' and I have no hope of winning you over to the communion which I prefer (namely, that of Scotland), you had better consult that big-wig uncle of yours, and be satisfied with his orthodox arguments, if you can; for Heaven knows that any thing is better than Popery!"

Geraldine remained some time in thought. At

length, starting up, she exclaimed,—“ You are right, Katherine ; I ought to endeavour, at least, to content myself with the Church in which I was born and educated, in which are my nearest and dearest ties, and in which I have been taught to know and love my Saviour. Could I be satisfied within the Church of England, what conflict, what agony would it not save me ! And I have just been struck by the coincidence of the Warden’s long promised visit, deferred till now, with my present unsettled state of mind ; for there is no one more capable of giving me instruction than this my revered uncle. Having promised me that, in my father’s absence, and for the whole of the long vacation, he would remain at the Hall,—shut up together during the raging of this disease, with an ample library at our command, every thing is favourable to my earnest wish for instruction ; and my learned uncle, with his strong bent towards deep theological research, is exactly the book of reference to suit my purpose, provided that he will deign to answer a woman’s questions : for, though by virtue of his creed, he must allow her to possess a soul, he often treats that soul as he would the butterfly which is its emblem.”

“ Are you in awe, then,” said Katherine, laughing, “ of this dignified head of a college ? ”

“ Yes, I am ; but that will not prevent my giving him my confidence : and I have only to prove to

him that I am not a butterfly, but a true ‘Psyche,’ and then prepare yourself, dear Kate, for hours and days of controversy, when, if truth be not doubly on my side, I must inevitably be foiled,—for here, like the little David, with but sling and stone, I brave the celebrated John Sinclair, of——, the Goliath of Oxford !”

CHAPTER II.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them thro' the prospect as it lies.

The Traveller.

THE conversation between the two friends was here interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing that coffee and tea were served in the saloon, and that the Warden had returned from the Town Hall, where he had been, since dinner, attending the conference of the Board of Health. On descending to the saloon, the ladies found not only the dignitary in question, but also two medical gentlemen, who had just arrived from London, and whom Dr. Sinclair had invited to spend the evening at Elverton Hall. The conversation between the gentlemen, which the entrance of Miss Carrington and her friend had suspended, was, after awhile, renewed; and the Warden, who grasped at every species of information, heaped question on question to his medical visitors, respecting the different theories advanced on the treatment of the cholera, and the results attendant on each. One of these surgeons had been appointed, by the London Board of Health, to remain in the town of Elverton, where the disease

raged most furiously ; the other was proceeding farther north, having but a few weeks previously returned from Vienna, where his reputation had been established. It happened that the arrival from London of these two gentlemen, took place exactly at the time when the uproarious people of Elverton were bearing on their shoulders, to the town hospital, their former victim, and present idol, Father Bernard, the Catholic priest ; and the gentleman from Vienna, Mr. Warburton, related, with much animation and apparent interest, the scene at the hospital on the re-appearance of the devoted Father Bernard. To this account Dr. Sinclair gave a polite attention. Geraldine lost not a word of the narrative ; and Katherine Graham, feeling equally alarmed and provoked at the fresh interest which this incident was likely to occasion towards the Popish priest in the heart of her friend, whispered to Geraldine, as Mr. Warburton's anecdotes closed, that, with respect to all this gentleman had advanced to prove the annihilation of self in the Catholic clergy, as seen abroad and at home, she could only observe, as a melancholy trait in human nature, that people were ever more devoted, and more constant to their delusions, than to the truth, and that this fact could only be accounted for by regarding it as the work of Satan !

At length Mr. Warburton, remembering, per-

haps, as he finished his eulogiums on the Catholic priesthood, that his subject was not chosen in the best taste, when addressing a dignitary of the English establishment, suddenly checked himself, and rising, with his fellow practitioner, took leave of the party at the Hall, promising great success to the cause of life and health at Elverton, from the extraordinary discoveries of his friend Dr. Newitt, whose pompously silent manner had not hitherto prepossessed the fair ladies in his favour, but who had succeeded more with the Warden, who liked silence, had learned to endure pomposity, and who, delighting in pamphlets which attacked neither Church nor State, had just been presented with the second edition of Dr. Newitt's boldly pronounced opinion, that "he who was well salted could never die!"

After the departure of the two medical visitors, Geraldine wandered about the elegant and spacious room, too much absorbed by the wished for yet dreaded conference with her uncle to be aware that his eye was upon her. She passed her hand across the strings of her neglected harp, then sighed, and left it, to draw aside the crimson drapery which hung before the sliding doors of plate glass that divided the south end of the room from a noble conservatory. But there was no moonlight, and the alabaster lamps had not that night been made to shed their dreamy poetic light

amongst the choice exotics. Geraldine turned from the uninviting obscurity, and, after inhaling successively all the various scents, whether in flask or flower, which lay in her uncertain and aimless course round the saloon, disturbing and playing with her sleepy little greyhound, and watching, or seeming to watch, the progress of her friend, Miss Graham's pencil, she drew her embroidery frame to a sofa, and, in a listless manner, prepared the shades of silk for her task. A sudden increase of light at length roused her from this state of abstraction, and she looked up, to meet the calm yet searching gaze of the Warden, who had raised the light of the lamp near to where Geraldine sat, and who now stood watching his niece as though prepared to address her. Geraldine's heart beat as she returned her uncle thanks for his attention to her ; for she felt, by the expression of his countenance, that she had become an object of solicitude to him, and that the moment of explanation had perhaps arrived.

"Geraldine," at length began Dr. Sinclair, "are you well?"

"My head throbs, uncle, but otherwise I am well."

"You are the daughter," continued he, "of the only woman I ever unvaryingly respected ; and, as a child, you were remarkable for courage, both physical and moral. Knowing the advantages you

have possessed of an enlightened and religious education, and the strength which can be given, even to the weakest, by a firm trust in Providence, I own I am surprised, I am disappointed, I am shocked, to see my sister's daughter sink unnerved at the approach of danger. Most true, it is an awful thing to die ! and to the young, the lovely, and the prosperous, it may be hard to quit the flattering scenes of earth : but you, Geraldine, have been better taught the nothingness of time, the value of eternity !”

A pause followed this appeal, during which the Warden and Miss Graham exchanged looks, and the latter rose with the intention of relieving the uncle and niece from the constraint of a third person ; but Geraldine held out her hand to detain her friend, saying, “ I have no secrets withheld from you, Katherine. Remain, to hear me assure my uncle that it is neither the fear of death, nor the loss of earthly possessions, which causes my present distress. No ! I have, indeed, been better taught : for ‘ what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?’ ”

“ If,” said the Warden, in a softened tone of voice, “ you are suffering from the remembrance of time misspent, and talents unemployed,—if doubts of your acceptance and salvation harass you, think of the price paid for all sin, with hearty repentance, and the God who has mercifully favoured you

by membership with his pure and holy *Protestant* Church of England, will surely never fail you,—if, on your side, you be but faithful to the means of grace afforded you.”

At this allusion to her discovered interest in Catholicity, Geraldine looked up from the work-frame, over which she had again bent her head; and feeling that her uncle had now made an opening for her confidence, which had been unhopèd for, and which, if evaded, might never occur again, determined to avow at once the cause of her doubts. Yet, when she caught the softened expression of his eye, and felt how that expression would be changed at her disclosure, she became again unnerved, and, hiding her face with her hands, wept audibly; while Dr. Sinclair, but little accustomed to woman’s tears, and still uncertain from what cause they proceeded, remained patiently awaiting the time when, in the natural course of things, a weeping fit might cease. Nor did he wait in vain. After an inward struggle, and an inward prayer, Geraldine met the Warden’s gaze, and firmly said,—“Uncle Sinclair, I shall with gratitude confide in you, and receive your instructions, for I greatly need them. I have been, during the last twelve months, both alarmed and distressed by the clamour and division of opinion in the Church of England. I apply to you, as a dignitary of that establishment, to satisfy me respecting her autho-

urity to decide on points of faith ; and I pray that my doubts on this subject may be satisfactorily answered : for, if not, I fear—I feel—Oh ! uncle pray forgive me—I must become—a Catholic !”

Our heroine had made so great an effort in revealing the state of her mind to the orthodox and awful Warden of ——, that, in the long pause which ensued, her excited imagination conjured up every disaster to herself that could occur. How great then was her relief, when, in a voice unusually calm and mild, Dr. Sinclair replied, “ My dear child, do not distress yourself by a fancied departure from your Church, or by doubts of her authority. You have, unhappily, been cast amidst a lawless crew, where you have heard and witnessed enough to have unsettled a deeper theologian than one of your sex and age could well be. I cannot be surprised that you have mistaken the reverse of wrong for right, and that, ‘alarmed and distressed,’ as you express it, by Protestant license of belief, you should feel a security in the opposite extreme of Popish dogmatism. But the moderate and judicious Church of England steers a middle course, and, with the revered Fathers of that Church for my fellow champions, I will engage to prove to you, with what judgment, with what wisdom, with what tempered zeal and solid piety our noble Church accomplished her reform, and in preserving her apostolic and transmitted authority,

has power to lead her children in all matters both of faith and discipline. She was, at the Reformation, purified but not destroyed, and when thus she emancipated herself from the iron thralldom of Rome, she preserved unimpaired her succession of duly ordained ministers, who are the shepherds, not the tyrants, of the flock. Invested with full authority, they keep clear of all abuse, and, while the monopolizing power of the Papacy assails her on one side, and the lawless jealousy of the Dissenters on the other, the pure, holy, and majestic Church of England calmly pursues the middle path of truth ! But this perfect Church is in danger," continued the Warden more warmly. " Yes ! she is in danger, and her foes are within herself. These Jansenists of the Church of England will destroy her ; and she would do well, perhaps, in this instance, to follow the stern example of Rome, and cast these domestic enemies from her bosom, even at the expense of some estimable individuals."

" Are you speaking of the Evangelical or Low Church party ?" said Geraldine.

" I am," replied the Warden. " This mistaken body, amongst which you have so unfortunately been thrown, would confound their catholic, apostolic, hierarchical Church, with all those various sects from which she stands aloof. She is peculiar, she is alone ; for, while all the Protestant communities on the Continent, and the dissenting tribes at

home, send each individual to the 'Bible alone,' thence to collect, as it may chance to be, truth or error, by his correct or incorrect interpretation, the Church of England refers her sons to a standard of interpretation collected from the authority of ages. The appeal is made to a pure and holy time in the Universal Christian Church, against this present brawling self-sufficient age. No true, faithful, and humble member of our judicious Church, need ever hesitate or tremble on his path; for, while no tyranny compels his choice of belief, there is every possible guidance and assistance in his search for truth. The Holy Scriptures are open to him, the interpretation of the early Church is offered to him, and these *united* form his creed. Had this double reference been followed, we never should have witnessed the scandal of these latter times, these modern controversies, which tear the Protestant world to pieces, and justly draw on it the scorn of Rome."

"Tell me," inquired Geraldine, "to what extent the Church of England carries her respect for antiquity?"

"She receives," replied her uncle, "all the primitive creeds, and the four first general councils; she submits to the common assent of the Fathers during the five first centuries of the Church catholic; and, with this preponderance of evidence, this glorious cloud of witnesses, how can

a man err, but through his own presumption, or indolence, or love of notorious change?"

At this instant, the folding-doors were thrown open by the house steward, who announced the hour for the customary evening devotion in the library, where the domestics were already assembled; and Geraldine, greatly reassured and comforted by the promises given to her by her uncle, in the name of his Church, arose with Miss Graham, and, shading with her dark ringlets her still tearful countenance, took her friend's arm into the further room. The Warden followed to his seat, at the library table, where, having read the second lesson and evening psalms appointed for the day, he led the devotions and prayers taken from the Liturgy of the Church of England, concluding with the collect of the Sunday preceding, which happened to be the seventh after Trinity. Often as Geraldine had listened to that exquisite prayer, never had she followed it with such wrapt devotion as now, when the deep and sonorous voice of the Warden began,—“ Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and, of thy great mercy, keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.” Then followed the blessing, after which the servants retired, and the Warden, instead of remain-

ing, as was his custom, in the library, to read without interruption till the hour of repose, drew Geraldine's arm within his own, and, kindly pressing it, led her back to the saloon, and seated himself by her on the sofa she had before occupied. A long silence followed, but no longer an awful one to Geraldine, who, touched and encouraged by the unexpected indulgence of her uncle, felt her naturally buoyant spirits revive, and the confiding affection of her heart flowing with double tides towards him. Feeling that, perhaps, she had not sufficiently evinced her gratitude, and the silence continuing still unbroken, Geraldine gently took her uncle's hand, and pressed it to her lips, saying, "I do not intend, dear Sir, to give you only half my confidence, since you have so kindly invited me to trust you with all my doubts and fears. I am ready to reply to any question you may think proper to ask me."

"Tell me this, my dear," at length said the Warden, "for on this I have been pondering, are you perfectly sure that your late preference for the Romish Church has been a negative one only, not a positive one; that is, are you quite correct in supposing that your dissatisfaction with Protestantism would alone lead you to Catholicism?"

"Yes," replied Geraldine, "for, excepting some few points, in which I think the Catholics have clearly the right on their side, I should be more

inclined to agree with my own Protestant community, could I but find her firm in conscious truth. At present, I have only some vague yearnings towards a Church, which by some inexplicable secret seems to be never wavering, never weary—to have an elasticity, a strength, proceeding from some hidden principle, wanting in the Church of England; for this holy mother of ours seems to be struck by a moral palsy! Why is it that, at this present time, in the raging of this fatal disease, our clergy shrink from encountering its victims, while the Catholic priests are to be found in the midst of them, undertaking not only the priestly office, but that also of nurse and of physician, to which has often been added the burial of the corrupted corpse? Some invincible attraction seems to draw me towards those devoted Christians; but I cannot believe all they believe, unless, indeed, their apparent superstitions could be explained to me.”

“Well, well!” said the Warden, “I do not wish, from party spirit, to refuse my meed of praise to the zeal of sincere and pious men, however mistaken in their creed: but we are forgetting the question of Church authority, which, if I understand aright, you are anxious to establish, but which you cannot clearly perceive to be the lawful inheritance of the Church of England. Now, to-morrow, or at any time you like to appoint, I will

give you my whole attention, stock of learning, and powers of reasoning, on this point, and will engage to establish, beyond all doubt, that the Church of England has succeeded to the rights and privileges of apostate Rome, and is the catholic and apostolic Church of Christ on earth. But now," continued the Warden, rising and lighting a taper, as the chimes of the French clock announced the hour of eleven, "I would advise you to seek (after humble and earnest prayer) the repose you seem to need. Good night, Miss Graham; one might fancy you some devotee, worshipping the features you are delineating, so completely have your eyes been rivetted by the fine head you are copying so exactly."

"Not a single remark of yours has, however, escaped me, I assure you, Sir," returned Katherine, "and I beg leave to be present at the instructions you propose giving to your niece; for I own that, with my low church views and feelings, I am as curious as she can be, though not so painfully anxious, to hear the isolated position of the English Establishment, amidst the sister Protestant Churches, vindicated from tyranny and vain presumption!"

"Ah! young lady, those are bold words," said the Warden.

"They are bold because they are true," re-

turned the dauntless Katherine, “and since I have listened to this evening’s dialogue, I own myself to be less of a churchwoman than ever. I was not before aware of what the English Church assumed, but now I am perfectly astonished at her arrogance !”

Dr. Sinclair nearly dropped the taper he held, and stood perfectly astonished in his turn, that so young a woman should presume to declare, without compunction, her defalcation from the venerable establishment in which it had been her happy lot to be born. He did not, however, reply, but, bidding a kind “God bless you” to his niece, and bowing coldly to the protesting and anti-hierarchical Katherine, the dignitary of the Church of England retired for the night.

“Katherine, my love,” said Geraldine, as the friends parted in the open gallery which ran round the hall, “do not vex my uncle by your Scotch objections to the English Church just at present. It is rather hard upon him for us both to attack him, at different points ; besides, it will puzzle the subject to my already confused mind.”

“My dear Geraldine, I will promise not to speak at the same instant with yourself ; for that, indeed, would be enough to distract us all ; and though I cannot promise to be totally silent, I will not puzzle you away from Protestantism. Indeed, I repeat

that it would be far better for you to comprehend, and embrace your uncle's opinions, than to become a member of a still more arrogant Church. However," continued Miss Graham, laughing as she turned away, "I shall think but little of your doctor of divinity, if he cannot stand an attack from two women."

CHAPTER III.

Truth is deposited with man's last hour,
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust.

YOUNG.

Miss Carrington awoke the following morning, with a feeling of hope, of joy in her existence, which, although natural to the buoyancy of her disposition, had been damped, nay, all but destroyed, during the preceding months of mental solicitude, and, what was far less endurable, mental uncertainty.

Decision of character, and an almost impetuous love of truth, had been evinced in earliest childhood, and had strengthened with her strength, under the encouragement of a father who had fostered these qualities, almost, it had sometimes been feared, to the risk of the more feminine and gentle ones of deference and endurance: and, for the first time in her life, to have been kept in suspense without hope of relief, to have been tossed to and fro between the most opposed trains of thought and argument, was a trial under which both health and spirits had sunk. It was true, that even now she could not fix by anticipation

the result of her conferences with Dr. Sinclair; but to rest somewhere, to be past all doubt, and to find in religion all, and more than all, she had ever done before—this was what Geraldine now fully expected; and perceiving by her watch that she had overslept the usual hour for rising, she joyfully rang the bell for her attendant, still continuing to indulge in a species of dreamy meditation, more fraught with enjoyment than profit, during another hour. Starting up, at length, full of wonder that she was thus left to herself, Geraldine rang an authoritative peal for her neglectful tirewoman, and arose. Still no one approached, and, divided between discontent and alarm, the Heiress of Elverton, for the first time in a life of three and twenty years, was compelled to finish her toilet without assistance. Having at length achieved it with some difficulty, she passed from her dressing-room, through the boudoir, to a little anteroom, which, terminating her suite of apartments, opened on the gallery from whence she had parted from Miss Graham the night before. The outward door of this anteroom was locked on the side of the gallery, and after shaking it ineffectually, and calling aloud, but in vain, for assistance, Geraldine at length suspected the motive for her imprisonment. Listening with beating heart, she heard, from the hall below, the sound of voices, and distinguished that of her uncle above the rest,

giving directions in his usual clear, calm, manner. In a few moments Geraldine's apprehensions were confirmed, by hearing the Warden order some one to ride instantly with a note to Mr. Edmund Sinclair, and, in the interval, to hoist some signal, agreed upon with the inmates of the Vicarage, to warn them that disease had broken out at the Hall. Her uncle then was safe—but Katherine!—was she the victim? Springing from the door, as she remembered another egress by which she could gain the apartment of her friend, Geraldine hastily returned to her boudoir, and, to her unspeakable relief, saw Katherine Graham rushing up the flight of steps, which communicated by a balcony with the private flower garden beneath. Several of the servants followed, carrying the breakfast, and supporting Miss Carrington's maid, who, having fainted, was borne into her mistress's room, and laid on a sofa.

“Geraldine,” said Miss Graham with emotion, “you have doubtless guessed the truth.”

“Yes,” replied she, “the destroying angel is at length passing over this house, and has struck some victim. Thank God for my loved father's absence, for your and my uncle's safety, and also for having spared me this faithful creature,” added she, kneeling by the side of her maid, and administering the usual remedies, “for I pray that this terror may not be the forerunner of disease. Do you know any particulars?”

“None whatever,” said Katherine. “I found my doors both locked on the outside, and having conjectured in vain who could be guilty of so practical a joke, I sate down quietly to read, until it should please my unknown tyrant to let me have my breakfast. The truth did glance across my mind, but I repelled it. After my patience had had endured a great deal, your Mrs. Kelsoe, followed by my own Phoebe, suddenly appeared, grasped my arm, dragged me down stairs, and through rooms I knew not, into the library, thence to the terrace, then down the slope to your private garden, where we met the men-servants bringing our breakfasts by an equally circuitous route. On seeing them, Mrs. Kelsoe for the first time broke silence, uttered the word ‘cholera,’ and fainted.”

“Poor dear Kelsoe,” cried Geraldine, “I will not upbraid you for fainting, since you have well fulfilled your appointed task.”

“She will soon recover, ladies,” said Phoebe; and if you please to take your breakfast, because I heard Mrs. Kelsoe receive strict orders from the Warden, that she was to attend to that, and to every thing that would make you strong and cheerful; and the reverend doctor, your uncle, wrote you a note, besides these messages, Miss Carrington.”

“Where? where is it?” cried Geraldine.

“ Here,” groaned the reviving Mrs. Kelsoe, trying to extend the paper to her mistress, and then sinking back.

Geraldine read as follows :—“ Let your faith be firm and practical: occupy yourself constantly, and be cheerful. Do not attempt to leave your suite of rooms, and your own flower garden. You will know best, as mistress of this house, how to arrange with the least possible inconvenience to yourself and your friend. Your meals will be sent you, and I shall hope to join you in the evening. J. S.”

“ Oh ! God grant it may be so !” said Geraldine, giving the note to her friend.

“ How characteristic of the head of a college !” cried Katherine smiling, “ first to lock us up, and then to beg us not to get out ! Why, we cannot help being obedient, which, perhaps, is the safest predicament, after all, in which to place four women. Pray, Phoebe, who is ill ?”

“ I don’t know, Ma’am,” returned the girl, hesitating; and then added, “ Mrs. Kelsoe wishes to tell the bad news, Ma’am, herself.”

A rapid recovery now took place from the fainting fit into which the elder Abigail had fallen. She shook her head at Phoebe, and, on Miss Graham observing roguishly, that *her* maid had better inform them of what had passed, “ as Mrs. Kelsoe was still so weak,” the latter started on her feet, protesting that not only was she perfectly re-

stored, but Phoebe knew nothing except through her, having been locked up herself till brought up to her lady's room. "Not that I am yet permitted, my dear ladies, to say a word, good or bad, till you have been strengthened and refreshed by breakfast; for so I faithfully promised the worthy and reverend Warden, who commanded that my lips were to be hermitlike (hermetically) sealed, till after that essential meal. Those were his very words."

"I cannot stand this tragi-comedy any longer," said Miss Graham, drawing Geraldine away to the table where the breakfast was spread, "and, upon my word, I know so imperfectly one servant from another, that, now I find the old alarmist is herself safe, I care not for her history." Accordingly, as the only means of obtaining the information for which she was so anxious, Geraldine sate down with Katherine to a hasty repast, while her worthy attendant, divided between real concern for what had occurred, and the important post she held, in being the only person who could impart it, sate groaning and hinting, and begging the ladies not to hurry themselves to hear awful news, while she rocked herself to and fro in the bergère, which her mistress had compelled her to retain. At length, the term of probation over,—“Oh! ladies, oh! Miss Carrington, it is the housekeeper!—she is in agonies—she is dying—she has turned quite black, and is shrivelled up to a mummy!

But oh ! ladies, what matters it, you know, for the body ? it is her poor deluded and perishing soul that is the great concern ; and ah ! it is awful to think what she is clinging to in her last moments, raving to see a clergyman, to confess to him, and to receive absolution ! Popery, ladies, rank Popery ! and this too from Mrs. Goodwin, who always held to her Bible and Prayer Book, and who swore so by her Church, that really in the housekeeper's room one was obliged to pick out one's words, and look at them, before one dared to speak on pious matters ;—and here's the end of such starch orthodoxy, ma'am ! It's awful ! that's all I can say."

"Oh ! my poor Goodwin," cried Geraldine, "my parents' attached and faithful friend, during forty years of service. I must go to her, I must see her once again," and she started from her seat ; till, remembering her imprisonment, she added, "My uncle well foresaw the necessity of constraint, if he wished to keep me from the deathbed of one I love so much. Oh ! must she really die ?"

"Why, ma'am, unfortunately, so long as every thing had been prepared in the house, baths, and flannels, and bottles of stuff without end, when it came to the push, nothing was ready. The servants all ran away, except the little scullery maid, who never knew what the danger was. As for the cook, she caught up a bonnet and shawl, I verily believe of Mrs. Goodwin's own, and off she

set in quest of the doctor, as she said ; but never a bit of it ; she locked up her room with all her things, and has never come back. Then the labels got torn of the bottles, and the patent steam-bath would not act, and every one got distracted ; till down came the steward (for all this happened at five in the morning), and he sent off for Mr. Thompson, who came in no time ; but it seems that all this disturbance had reached the ears of the Warden, who rang for his own man, and in bed wrote a note for that famous doctor from London, Dr. Newitt. Well ! ma'am, he came too ; and Mr. Thompson he drew up stiffly, and Dr. Newitt he begged not to intrude ; and the Warden, who was now dressed and down, said, ‘Gentlemen, please to walk this way,’ and took them into the library, to hear what each had to say. But first, ma'am, I should tell you about having a parson, which I protest caused more confusion than all the doctors put together ; for not a bit would Mrs. Goodwin have the reverend Warden ! Such an insult, you see, Miss Carrington, and he such a dignitary ! I’ll have Mr. Edmund, says she, or else a stranger ; but she kept calling on Mr. Edmund, and the Warden wrote, and sent to the vicarage.”

“Yes ! I heard my uncle’s voice giving that order, and, doubtless, his dear excellent brother

will sooth and cheer the last moments of this poor distressed woman."

"Oh, ma'am, she may well be distressed: there's something dreadful on her mind, depend upon it; and Mr. Hilton, the steward, is in the secret, as all the servants say, for he never left her, with his attentions and consolations, and was heard to say, when he thought himself alone with her, 'Keep it to yourself,' says he, 'a parson is the last man to hear it. You've done your duty faithfully, and a faithful servant is always rewarded,' says he !

"Well, ladies, I know but little more to say; for, as I was afraid to go down the back stairs, I only kept peeping about for some chance news from the servants at the top of the great staircase, when the Warden came out of the library, and was at first very angry that I had not been locked up; but when I explained my great prudence, he hurried me off in a tangent, with the cruelty of saying he was persuaded that the disease was both contagious and infectious; so there's no escape for us any how !"

While Mrs. Kelsoe was beguiling the time of its painful suspense to her young lady, by ample conjectures on slender materials, a scene of far greater excitement was taking place within the beautiful and apparently peaceful Vicarage, which was embosomed in that wooded valley described

in our opening chapter, and situated just one mile from the Hall. At the hour when the bearer of the Warden's note started on his commission, the Rev. Edmund Sinclair, his beautiful wife, and four elder children, were enjoying, from windows that looked not on the infected town, the calm soft air of a July morning. The fair twin girls were busily employed in some little work of fancy, while their younger brothers were equally engrossed in raising a bridge, with prepared arches and bricks sent them by their uncle, the Warden. No lessons were thought of on that bright morning; for it was their parents' wedding-day; and besides a promised ride each on the pony, and sundry other pleasures, a magic lantern was to wind up the evening, to which all the establishment were invited. The father of these happy ones, having finished his breakfast, reclined in a reading chair, which was likewise the gift of the elder Sinclair, partly following the theories of a modern theological author, partly watching the labours of the little architects on the carpet, and partly endeavouring not to hear the whispered secret between his little girls and their governess, respecting the present to be made of their work to papa and mamma, before they were sent to bed.

"Mamma," at length cried one of the boys, who, despairing of the scientific arrangement of the bridge, was playing at a window, "there is

the cholera signal put up at the Hall. Come here, and look : there it flies from a high window, just over the cedars !”

The whole party flew to the window, and Mr. Sinclair ascertained the fatal truth, that some one, perhaps his brother or niece, had been seized by the unsparing malady. At that instant the footman entered with a note from Dr. Sinclair, informing his brother that their departed sister’s old and faithful housekeeper had been attacked by cholera,—that her mind was oppressed by some secret she wished to impart,—and that while she would not permit him, the Warden, to attend her dying bed, she called out repeatedly for Mr. Edmund.

As Mr. Sinclair perused this summons, his wife, eagerly leaning over his shoulder, devoured its contents. “Thomas,” said she to the servant, while she secured the note, and plunged it into a flower vase filled with water, “leave the room instantly, and desire the messenger from the hall to go round into the garden ; we will throw the answer to him from the window.” The man obeyed. “Edmund,” continued she, turning to watch the expression of her husband’s countenance, “you are not mad enough to listen to your brother’s selfish suggestion ? You surely do not believe one word of the old woman’s preference for *you* ?”

“And why not ?” replied Mr. Sinclair ; “I am

her parish priest, she naturally turns to me. I have held this living, the gift of General Carrington, nine years, during which time his household have constantly attended my ministry, — they have, therefore, a claim on me for the last consolations of religion.”

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed his wife, “ do you actually think of putting yourself in the way of certain death ?”

“ I must leave consequences in the hand of God,” replied he, solemnly ; “ and now, my dearest Charlotte, let me entreat you not to place these constant obstacles in the way of my obvious duty. Do not forget, as, alas ! you have too often done, that, in marrying one of my holy profession, you bind yourself to assist, not to retard, your husband, in his vocation.”

“ I cannot listen to preaching now, Edmund,” interrupted his wife, becoming extremely agitated. “ Answer me plainly,—‘ Yes,’ or ‘ No,’—do you mean to go to the Hall ?”

“ I do,” replied he, and rushed to the door ; but his wife had anticipated him, and, turning the lock, placed the key in her bosom, and sank on her knees before him.

“ Charlotte, my love, I cannot submit to this,—I cannot be detained,” cried the husband. “ Is it not enough to have prevented every personal effort

I would have made amongst the sick and dying poor, but that you would force me to deny the last request of a faithful though humble friend? Charlotte, recollect yourself,—exert more Christian strength of mind, or you lose yourself in my regard.”

“And what is an old servant, what is a friend, compared to your wife, to your children? What claim can equal theirs? And how can you answer to your conscience the bringing back to us this fatal malady?”

“God will preserve my family,” replied Edmund Sinclair, trembling with emotion. “My own Charlotte, think of the vows I have taken as a Gospel minister; and remember that, if unfaithful to them, I can never expect Divine assistance.”

“I know not what were your vows as a clergyman, Edmund, for I never heard them,—I only know what they were as a husband; and, by those remembered vows, I hold you fast. I will not let you go. Is it thus you would ‘love and cherish’ me ‘till death do us part?’ Is it thus you would desert the devoted mother of your children, or return to destroy her?”

Mr. Sinclair here endeavoured to raise her, fondly kissing the hand he held, but at the same time turning his eyes towards the window, whence

escape was perfectly feasible. Mrs. Sinclair, however, caught the direction of his looks and thoughts, and, throwing her arms around him, burst into tears; while, as the wondering and tearful children gathered round them, the governess ventured to suggest, that, “if the Warden or Miss Carrington had sent for Mr. Sinclair, it would have been painful to have refused them, but that this old woman was no relation.”

Mr. Sinclair sighed as he replied,—“Every soul is of equal value in the sight of God, and with Him all men are brothers. To the inmates of the Hall I have bound myself as their pastor before God. My own love, be reasonable, be more than reasonable, be full of faith and trust, and the Master, whom I serve, will protect me and comfort you.”

“Oh! Edmund, for God’s sake do not go on talking to me in those set phrases! I know very well what the obvious duties of a clergyman are; and I am certain that carrying about the infection from house to house, is not one of them. It is your duty to obey the Government, and the Board of Health has officially commanded that the contagion should not be thus conveyed. You know all this very well, Edmund, I read you the announcement myself from the newspaper; and you also know the dissatisfaction that was expressed because the Roman Catholic priests would not obey the law of the land.”

“Not the law of the land, Charlotte; no punishment could attend its infraction: but now listen. I must go up to the Hall, but I will not return here immediately. I will pass the night at the lodge, and then change my dress.”

“And there die,” interrupted the wife, “and see me die there, and the one yet unborn! Yes! kill us both at once, and then be satisfied that you have well fulfilled your ordination vows! Go! go!” cried she, with hysterical vehemence; “go, you love me not,—you never did, and you shall never see me more!”

Accustomed, as he had long been, to similar scenes, whenever bent on the fulfilment of those clerical functions in which danger to himself might be dreaded, Edmund Sinclair had never been so powerfully affected, even during the first months of his marriage. This beautiful and devoted creature had passionately thrown herself at his feet, and her sobs echoed in his heart: he thought, also, on this their anniversary.

The children, fully understanding that their mother was in distress, and their father in danger, joined their lamentations to hers, each little hand fastening on his dress, to force him to remain in safety, while the gentle governess again expostulated: “Surely, Mr. Sinclair, these dear ones have the first claim on you. Excuse me, if I take the liberty to think you have, in this case,

mistaken the line of duty. God can never bid you forget that you are a husband and a father."

Mrs. Sinclair had now ceased to sob and lament; but it was not that she listened to this last appeal in her favour, for her frame, incapable of longer sustaining this highly wrought state of feeling, sank heavily on the floor, and her rebellious grief was lost in forgetfulness.

"Great God!" cried the agonised husband, as, disengaging himself from the children, he raised his apparently lifeless victim, and bore her to a couch. "Thou canst not demand the annihilation of these very affections which thou thyself hast blessed. Charlotte, my best treasure, I quit you not. Miss Rigby, tell the messenger from the Hall that Mrs. Sinclair is too ill for me to leave her, that I send my best wishes and my blessing to poor old Goodwin, and that I entreat she will have no human preferences at such a crisis, but consent to see my excellent brother the Warden. And take the children away, Miss Rigby: I wish to be left with my wife."

"I cannot, sir," replied that lady, "the door is, you know, locked; and even, while fainting, Mrs. Sinclair still grasps the key."

Tears gushed into Edmund's eyes as he drew forth his Charlotte's now unresisting hand from the folds of her dress: it fell powerless, and dropped the key. The governess and children withdrew;

and, no sooner was he freed from witnesses, than sinking on his knees, by the couch of his still insensible wife, and burying his face in the cushions, Edmund Sinclair gave way to the remorseful emotions of his soul,—for he had yielded to the enervating effect of earthly love, and, in the husband, lost the priest of God !

CHAPTER IV.

Ye, who in place of shepherds true,
Come trembling to their awful trust.

Keeble.

IN the meantime, the library at Elverton Hall presented a scene of, perhaps, too frequent recurrence, that of a prolonged discussion between the arbitrators, humanly speaking, of life and death; while every five minutes, thus wasted, diminished the probability of rescue for the object of their punctilio. In fact, it happened unfortunately for the poor old housekeeper's existence, that each of the medical men, summoned to prescribe, was the marked leader of a totally opposed system, with this additional obstacle to agreement, that one practitioner, being the cleverest of the clever at Elverton, was defender of the cause of provincial talent; while the other felt and showed the full importance of representing the London Board of Health, whence he had been sent with delegated power. Each was stout hearted. Mr. Thompson, resisting innovation, adhered to hot flannels, brandy, and laudanum; while, inspired by the genius of discovery, Dr. Newitt pronounced

on the saline particles to be reproduced in the blood. While the discussion was at its full height, and the Warden, to whom college etiquette had taught endurance, was standing between the bowing opponents, armed, in one hand, with a mixture of Mr. Thompson's, and, in the other, with the pamphlet of Dr. Newitt, the messenger returned from the vicarage, conveying the answer to the Warden's note. This sudden and violent illness might have caused some alarm that the scourge of cholera had attacked the vicar's lady; but the Warden merely uttered, "Woman! woman:" and, with characteristic rapidity, despatched one of the carriages, with an urgent note to the rector of the next parish, desiring that all speed might be used.

Another hour passed, during which the learned doctors, after bowing and expressing to each other all that politeness could suggest, went each to visit the sufferer, to whom had already been applied the "old-fashioned" remedies of the family adviser, Mr. Thompson. The hand of death was evidently on her; but, during the most violent convulsions, the distress of her mind was ever super-eminent, and inspired the utmost pity and awe in the few who ventured near her. She expressed the greatest dread of death, until she should have seen a clergyman: yet the mention of the Warden agitated her beyond measure; and once, regard-

less of the signs and whispers of the steward, who never left her, she cried out,—“Don’t talk to me of him,—he is no friend of General Carrington’s,—and shall I give occasion to *him* against my noble master?” These words were not forgotten by the servants.

The gentlemen were again met in the library; and the delicate question had been opened, whether, as Mr. Thompson could not save the patient, Dr. Newitt should, when the Rev. Mr. Thornhill was introduced, more perplexed, and infinitely more alarmed, than any of the party. “My dear sir,” said this gentleman, addressing the Warden, “I have, you see, complied with your urgent note: I did not keep your carriage a minute. I got in without the knowledge of my family. I have done my best; but really it struck me, coming along, (at an immensely quick pace by-the-bye) to enquire of these learned gentlemen their opinion respecting the contagiousness of this disease: for I should not consider it my duty towards Mrs. Thornhill, and my daughter,—in short, gentlemen, contagion or non-contagion, which is it?” The learned men, well aware how much on this point, also, they differed, bowed to each other to reply, while the rector turned from one to the other, awaiting the end of this official politeness. “Sir,” at length replied Dr. Newitt, “if you have read my pamphlet,”—“But

I have not, sir,—I have not: I never knew that you had written a pamphlet. I should be particularly obliged by your opinion *viva voce*, not for any dread I have individually,—on the contrary; but as a question of importance generally. We will look upon it, sir, as an abstract question, whether by touch, or breath, or noxious effluvia.”

“Mr. Thornhill,” interrupted the Warden, rather sternly, “I must lament that caprice, or aversion, or some inexplicable cause, prevents my being allowed by this poor woman to hear her burdensome secret, and give her absolution; but thus debarred, allow me to suggest that, without further delay, I should conduct you to her death-bed, while you shall be provided with every possible antidote against the danger you thus brave.”

“Thompson! my worthy friend,” cried the confessor “*malgré lui*,” as he walked sideways after the Warden, “you used to take the strongest snuff of any of my acquaintance.” “Oh! my good sir,” exclaimed Dr. Newitt, “snuff is a prejudice which”—but the Warden, by the aid of a powerful arm, bearing off his clerical brother, the question of “snuff,” with all its fellow-questions, remained behind in the library with the men of science.

Towards evening, after intense suffering, and in spite of the active remedies that were at length applied, the poor old housekeeper breathed her last; and, according to the rules laid down by the

authorities, the body was immediately conveyed to some newly-consecrated ground without the town. The Rector had been very kind to the afflicted woman, and far less alarmed when actually facing the danger, than when there remained a possibility of escape. He remained several minutes alone with her; after which, calling back her faithful friend, the steward, Mr. Thornhill administered the Sacrament to his dying communicant, and took leave of the Hall, to return on horseback to the Rectory, conceiving this plan the safest, from the purification his dress would receive from the open air. Scarcely had the worthy Rector arrived at home, when Mrs. Thornhill, who had wisely been kept in ignorance of the motive of her husband's morning excursion, but whose curiosity had thereby received an impetus not to be allayed either by soothing or authority, having learned at length the object of his pastoral visit, now opened a succession of skirmishing attacks, respecting "what the old woman could possibly have said to him;" which attacks, during the day, were followed up, after dinner, by a general engagement, so admirably conducted, that the honest Rector's tactics were at length completely foiled, and the secret of his penitent's confession taken from him, to his infinite surprise, vexation, terror, and remorse! "My dear," said he, at length, endeavouring to re-assure himself,

“I feel convinced of your discretion !” Mrs. Thornhill drew up with dignity, and expressed herself with such caution and propriety, that the Rector, almost satisfied, withdrew to his study ; when the lady, joining an intimate and dear friend, at the house of a third confidante, of whose “discretion” she “felt convinced,” indulged herself and them by imparting, under promise of inviolable secrecy, the important and wonderful disclosure which had been made on that eventful morning.

“And how have you passed these tedious hours ?” enquired Dr. Sinclair, as, to the joy of his fair prisoners, he visited them early in the evening, and established himself in the easy chair appropriated to him in Geraldine’s boudoir. “I fear that you have been anxious, and annoyed by various rumours, without the power of ascertaining the truth.”

“We have, indeed, longed for your promised visit, my dear uncle,” said Geraldine ; “for many have been the wild stories, brought by the servants, to Kelsoe, which have not lost their vivid colouring by passing through her fanciful head. I have heard, amongst other things, that, during the interval when poor Goodwin despaired of seeing a clergyman, she uttered many things, both painful and mysterious, connected with her absent master.”

“My dear girl,” replied the Warden, “you

must be prepared for hearing every absurd report possible concerning those vague, and, doubtless, delirious, words of your poor housekeeper; and you must be prepared, also, to disbelieve and cast scorn upon them all."

"Fear nothing respecting my peace of mind," returned Geraldine; "for if you, uncle, disbelieve every thing that could tarnish the bright name of General Carrington, so much more should his daughter. Sooner could the gentle zephyr uproot that mighty cedar grove, than this passing breath of calumny shake my trust in him."

"For my part," observed Miss Graham, "I should be sorely tempted to end this mystery about nothing, by just asking Mr. Thornhill what the poor bewildered old creature did say?"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Geraldine, "never glance, I beseech you, even in thought, at such a thing. Where would be the sacred confidence between the minister of God and the dying penitent, if, to ease every curious and impatient enquirer, the secrets of the death-bed were to be disclosed."

"I cannot but feel, however," continued her friend, "that the General's spotless honour is of far more consequence than a mere scruple of delicacy; for who can believe any sacredness to be attached to the last words of one who was either malicious or deranged?"

"Geraldine is right," observed the Warden.

“The last words of any dying penitent should be a sacred deposit in the ear of the minister; and although we do not, in the Church of England, hold this secrecy to be of sacramental obligation, as do the Romish priests, yet an early canon of our Church, bearing date 1608, enjoins the priest not to make known to any one what has been revealed to him; and, whether enjoined or not, it must ever be binding to a mind of honour and rectitude.”

“My dear uncle,” said Geraldine, “my chief occupation, during this long, sad day, has been the study of my Book of Common Prayer, my previous ignorance of which has been shared by all our little party, with the usual attendant on ignorance, namely, a full persuasion of our own knowledge. My maid, Kelsoe, who vaunts herself to be a ‘good Church woman,’ could not be persuaded but that poor Goodwin had turned ‘at least half Papist,’ because she could not die in peace without having made a full confession of her sins, and received priestly absolution. Katherine and I then searched for the office for the ‘Visitation of the Sick,’ and I own that I was as much astonished as she was, though not so much shocked, at the absolute authority with which the minister pronounces absolution. We then turned to the ‘Ordination Service,’ which is, indeed, most awful. What immense spiritual gifts are there bestowed on the newly-made priest! Yet Scripture fully warrants

all parts of the service, and especially the Apostolical imposition of hands, for conveying the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit."

"Read aloud that part of the service," said the Warden; and Geraldine, opening the large Prayer Book, which contained the solemn rite, read thus:—"The candidate kneels while the bishop solemnly invokes on him the Holy Ghost, that this Holy Spirit may impart to the new priest his seven-fold gifts!" "But here," continued Geraldine, turning over the page, "here is the part where there is nothing vague,—nothing that can be explained away. After the bishops, with the other priests, have laid their hands severally upon the head of every one who receives the order of priesthood, the receiver, humbly kneeling on his knees, the bishop says,—‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by *the imposition of our hands*: whose sins *thou* dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins *thou* dost retain they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of this Holy Sacrament. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Amen.’"

"When we had finished reading this awful service," continued Geraldine, "with all the Scriptural references for which we searched, and then returned to the ‘Visitation of the Sick,’ I was no

longer startled by the authority with which the minister pronounces"—

"Read first," interrupted the Warden, "what the Rubric directs."

Geraldine obeyed. "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort :—' Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of his great mercy absolve thee thine offences. And, by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' "

"Now explain to me, uncle," said Geraldine, as she closed the Prayer Book, "why, if the Church of England has retained the power originally granted by Christ to his Church, her clergy seem to shrink from owning and using this delegated power, so that our laity are, for the most part, ignorant of the doctrine of their Church on this point; and, while they rail at the Catholic priests for usurping the power which belongs to God alone, are unconsciously condemning their own ministers?"

"Come! my dear sir," cried Katherine, "confess the truth, that the clergymen of the Church of

England are all heartily though secretly ashamed of these remains of Popery in their half-reformed Church."

"Miss Graham," returned the Warden, "I repeat, that the Church, at the Reformation, was purified, not destroyed. These gifts, transmitted in ordination, are retained as verities by the orthodox ministers of the Church of England,—those whom you are pleased to call 'High Church;' but your friends, the Evangelicals, who disregard the authority which conveyed to them their sacred powers, entertain very loose opinions on the subject of priestly absolution."

"But, uncle," said Geraldine, "I cannot see why this confession and absolution, so plainly enforced by our Church, should be always deferred to the death-bed of the penitent? There must often occur, in the life of every one, difficulties, and trials, and temptations; and if his conscience be in trouble too hard to endure, why can he not unburthen his labouring mind to his clergyman, and receive, if truly penitent, the assurance of pardon, without waiting for the hour of death, when the memory often fails, or becomes distorted, as in the case of poor Goodwin?"

"Hand me your prayer-book, my dear," said Dr. Sinclair, "and I will point out to you that which you ought, indeed, to have already known, that to those, who desire to attend the Holy Com-

munion, there is an express invitation given, on the Sunday before, from the altar, to open their minds in private to their minister. ‘Therefore, if there be any of you who cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth farther comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God’s word, and open his grief, that, by the ministry of God’s holy word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.’ ”

“I am, indeed, ashamed,” replied Geraldine, “not to have remembered this; for I believe I must have heard these words given out occasionally at Church. Never having, however, been led to a practical application of their meaning, I had forgotten them; and accustomed as I have been, in my uncle Edmund’s congregation, to witness the most kind and intimate intercourse between them and their pastor, still I am convinced, there is not one individual amongst them but would shrink from what they would term the “unscriptural” notion of private absolution; while Edmund himself, in his humility, would never dare to confer it.”

“Your uncle Edmund,” cried the Warden, vehemently, “does more to pull down his Mother Church, by his dread or neglect of her holy

observances, his low view of the priesthood, and his condescensions to the Dissenters, than if he were a mere stick in office. The contents of his library proclaim the indecision of his mind, and are enough to distract the faith of an Apostle. Had those shelves been filled with the works of Barrow, Hooker, Hammond, South, Peirson, Mede, and Taylor, those glories of the Established Church, he would have been led by them to reverence antiquity; to consult, with them, the bishops, martyrs, and ecclesiastical writers of the first ages, and to shun these modern innovators, these Calvinistic levellers of the day !”

“ Well, dear uncle,” interrupted Geraldine, pleadingly, “ we will not speak just now of Edmund. Holy and zealous though he be, I prefer, when in doubt, to apply to you. I think that all the warnings, and all the encouragements, given on the approach to the Holy Sacrament, are most beautiful and edifying; and I particularly like what you have just read. Still, I think it a pity that this previous communication with our appointed minister is only recommended, not enforced.”

“ It is not in the benevolent nature of our Church to force the mind,” replied her uncle,—“ she wins, guides, instructs; and, as I have before said, her ministers are the shepherds, not the tyrants, of their flock.”

“But, if it were for my soul’s good, I should wish to be compelled,” said Geraldine. “I should feel it then to be no more tyranny than any other observance of my Church.”

“As for private absolution,” observed Miss Graham, “depend upon it, it has died a natural death, being too weak to live; and that public absolution is also in its dotage, may be very well perceived by any one at all acquainted with the tacit reform, which is gradually taking place, in these more enlightened days, in the State Establishment of England.”

“Miss Graham,” said the Warden gravely, “may I take the liberty to inquire, whether you are a member of the Established Church of England, or whether, as your Scotch name denotes, the National Kirk of the sister kingdom claims your allegiance?”

“Indeed, sir,” replied the young lady, “you may well make that inquiry, after the warmth I displayed last night on the subject of Church authority, a warmth for which, perhaps, I think I ought to apologise, my words having been addressed to a dignitary of the establishment I condemned.”

“Enough ! enough !” said the Warden, holding out his hand in token of forgiveness ; “ I too was ruffled ; yet I like freedom of discussion ; for from the clash of opinions truth is elicited. And should you belong to a Church which has cut itself off

from apostolic descent, and has thrown off the decent and venerable forms which we of England retain, I shall then argue with you more by reason, and less by authority, than I should employ, were you a member of my own respectable establishment."

"The truth is," replied Katherine, much amused by the Warden's high tone of treating both the Kirk and herself, "that I might belong to which community I pleased, either English or Scotch Church, without the guilt of change or schism. My father, and all my relations on his side, are Presbyterians, but I have been educated in the externals, I cannot call them the principles, of the Church of England."

"And why not the principles, Miss Graham?"

"Because, Dr. Sinclair, I really never knew what they were, till this evening."

"With your prayer-book in your hand, this is a strange confession," returned the Warden.

"But, uncle," interrupted Geraldine, "pardon me if I put in my claim to your first thoughts and explanations; for Katherine is happy in her opinions, vague as they are, while I am looking forward to your arguments, as though you were to plead in a matter of life and death."

"Fear not that I shall forget you, dear girl, or that you are not ultimately concerned in every thing I may explain to your friend; for although in the arguments I propose holding with her, I

shall have but little to do with Rome, yet, as the authority of our Church will be the question, this will interest and benefit you as well as Miss Graham. She calls in question the principle of Church authority : you seem anxious to establish the principle, but to question its appropriation by the Church of England. Now, you will own, that the first part of the argument lies with your independant friend here, to whom I shall be happy to devote myself to-morrow, after the breakfast to which I now invite myself every morning."

CHAPTER V.

As long as words a different sense will bear,
And each may be his own interpreter,
Our airy faith will no foundation find ;
The word's a weather-cock for ev'ry mind.

DRYDEN.

“ Good morning, my dear uncle,” “ Good morning, Warden,” cried the two expectants in the balcony of Geraldine’s boudoir, overlooking the flower garden, whence the learned and reverend gentleman was seen slowly advancing on the following morning, with a folio volume beneath his arm. He returned the greeting, and, ascending the steps to the favourite apartment, was soon seated between his fair antagonists, while a truce was agreed upon during the cheerful and friendly repast. Dr. Sinclair, however, seemed not unwilling to renew the discussions of the previous day ; and, after the servants had finished their attendance, and the ladies had fixed upon their employment for the morning, he threw out the challenge for attack to Katherine Graham, by saying, “ Pray, Miss Graham, what is your notion of a Church ? ”

Katherine looked up and smiled : “ Why, Dr.

Sinclair, I think, with my favourite Chalmers, that Scripture says marvellously little about a Church !”

“ Ah ! where does Chalmers say this ?”

“ I heard him preach at the Scotch Church in London, and I repeat his very words.”

“ Dr. Chalmers,” said the Warden, “ is a man of learning, of wisdom, of piety, and of eloquence : but I never yet knew the Calvinist who could go to his Bible without a sturdy independant resolution to see nothing there but what should suit his own plan of doctrine. Hand me a Bible, Geraldine, and I will show Miss Graham that Scripture says ‘ marvellously *much* about a Church.’ ”

“ Stop, sir,” said Katherine, “ and first understand both Dr. Chalmers and myself. You will find the *word* ‘ church ’ often recurring in Scripture ; no Bible reader thinks of denying that. But I attribute to it a far different signification from yours. I conceive the Church of Christ to be wholly spiritual ; for Christ says, the ‘ Kingdom of Heaven is within you.’ I believe that, under whatsoever denomination, and belonging to whatever outward community, all those who have the spirit of Christ are Christians, and form his pure invisible Church.”

“ Miss Graham, you believe *a* truth, but not *the* truth ; or, in other words, you believe the truth, but not the whole truth. You should re-

mark that, from the defective nature of all language, the word 'church' is employed in various significations. It means, primarily, the whole visible body of professing Christians; secondly, the heads or pastors of that body; thirdly, the spiritual or elected portion of the visible body; fourthly, the different congregations, separated, though in communion; and also, in modern acceptation, the buildings dedicated to the purposes of prayer and instruction. Our Divine Redeemer often speaks, it is true, of his pure and elect Church, and, in this sense, it is wholly spiritual and invisible: but again, he gives commands and promises totally incompatible with an invisible and merely spiritual church. For instance, what are we to understand by the following texts:—'Hear the Church.'—'If he neglect to hear the 'Church,' let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.' Then to the pastors themselves,—'Feed the flock which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof.'—'And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'—'Ye are as a city set on a hill.' There is no necessity for me to multiply text upon text, I should suppose, Miss Graham, farther to prove the obvious necessity of Christians being a visible body, and that, if the Church is 'as a city set on a hill,' she must be not only visible, but conspicuous!"

“ I perceive, Dr. Sinclair,” said Katherine smiling, “ that you have endeavoured to make your few but weighty texts serve you the double purpose of proving the authority as well as the visibility of the Church. Certainly, those who command and those who obey, as well as those who speak and those who listen, must be visible living men and women ; but as to any authority of one Christian over another, excepting the necessary influence of piety and learning, I own I cannot yet admit it either in theory or practice.”

“ Yet you read of Churches being ‘ established’ or ‘ confirmed,’ ” replied Dr. Sinclair ; “ which denotes the settlement of such rules and regulations as were called for by the increasing number of the Christians : and as the Apostles themselves could not always be present, it was necessary that some one having authority should be with each community, to set things in order. This one person must have been appointed by the Apostles ; for there is no evidence of a deacon or elder taking upon himself such an office in these early times, unless appointed by an Apostle, or by some one who had himself received his commission from an Apostle. This appointment was made by the laying on of hands, and has continued in the Church down to this day. Now, respecting the ‘ Church,’ as signifying those in spiritual authority, you will perceive that our Lord did not grant

ministerial authority to his disciples in general, but first to twelve, and then to seventy; that of those twelve, one was among the most wicked of mankind, and that our Lord well knew his character when he appointed him; that possibly some of those seventy might be unworthy persons; that our Lord, just before his departure, gave what may be called a fresh commission to his Apostles, which they should act upon after his ascension; that after that event, the twelve Apostles were the leading persons in the Christian Church, having under them two orders or degrees, viz. bishops (sometimes called elders) and deacons; and that this three-fold division of ministers in the Church lasted as far as the New Testament history reaches, the Apostles having set men over different Churches with apostolical authority, to preside during their absence, and to succeed them after their decease. This sufficiently appears from passages in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus. It farther appears, that to those immediate successors of the Apostles, who were of rank and authority above the bishops for a time, was given the title of 'Angel,' (see the prophecy in *Revelations* to the Seven Churches); and at a subsequent date, you find still the three degrees of Church authority, the highest title being called bishop, the next priest, and lastly, the deacon. But I will give my farther reasoning on this point," continued the

Warden, laying his hand upon the open folio volume beside him, “in the words of that bright ornament of the English Church, the holy Bishop of Down and Dromer: ‘All obedience to man is for God’s sake; for God, imprinting his authority upon the sons of men, like the sun reflecting upon a cloud, produces a parhelion, or a representation of his own glory, though in great distances and imperfection. It is the divine authority, though chartered upon a piece of clay, and imprinted upon a weak and imperfect man; and therefore, obedience to our superiors must be universal.— This precept is expressly apostolical. ‘Be subject to every constitution and authority of man for the Lord’s sake.’ It is for God’s sake, and therefore to every one, whether it be to the king, as superior, or to his ministers in subordination, that is, civil government. For Ecclesiasticus thus: ‘Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.’ Now, Miss Graham, if you can give any hidden and opposed meaning to these seemingly plain injunctions to ‘obey,’ to ‘submit yourself,’ to be ‘subject to’ your superiors as appointed by God, I am ready to hear your exposition; but I should hope that you begin to perceive that the Bible is explicit on the subject of both State and Church authority.”

“But, Dr. Sinclair, there is, both in Church

and State, so much of man's invention, so much that is anti-scriptural, that I should often feel that, in 'submitting,' and 'obeying,' and being 'subject to' them, I should, instead of honouring, offend, God. Now, where I can respect the authority over me, I am willing enough to submit, and can bow to the individual character of the man, but never to his office."

"Wrong, Miss Graham, wrong. Listen to farther arguments from the same revered source."

"You mean from the partial and biassed pen of your old bishop," returned Katherine. "Now, my dear sir, I am sorry to hurt your feelings; but I do not care the least for any bishop. I have just told you, that no official station whatever can inspire me with the slightest respect. I bow to character alone."

"Then here you may bow fearlessly," said the Warden with perfect command of temper; "the sternest non-conformist, the most narrow-minded sectarian, the most bigotted Romanist, must each and all pay tribute to the expansive mind, deep learning, fervent piety, and loving affections of the holy Jeremy Taylor. You may listen also to the following quotations with the less fear, that they are little more than a running commentary on Scripture:—"There is no power but of God,' so that no infirmity of person, no undervaluing circumstances, no exterior accident, is an excuse for

disobedience, and to obey the divine authority passing through the dictates of a wise, excellent, and prudent governor, but to neglect the impositions of a looser head, is to worship Christ only upon Mount Thabor, and in the glories of his transfiguration, and to despise him upon Mount Calvary, and in the clouds of his inglorious and humble passion. ‘Not only to the good and gentle,’ says St. Peter, ‘but to the harsh and rigid.’ Miss Graham, I do not wish to comment in any severe manner on your mistaken warmth against the Church, but to convince you by gentle reasoning. Here, again, is a striking passage:— ‘For God did with greater severity punish the rebellion of Korah and his company, than the express murmurs against himself, nay, than the high crime of idolatry. For this latter crime God visited them with the sword; but for disobedience and meeting against their superiors, God made the earth to swallow some of them, and fire from heaven to consume the rest, to show that rebellion is to be punished by the conspiracy of heaven and earth. And it is not amiss to observe, that obedience to man, being as it is for God’s sake, and yet to a person clothed with the circumstances and the same infirmities with ourselves, is a greater instance of humility than to obey God immediately, whose authority is divine, whose presence is terrible, whose power is infinite; just as it is both

greater faith and charity to relieve a poor saint for Jesus' sake, than to give anything to Christ himself, if he should appear in all the robes of glory and immediate address.' Miss Graham, I have perhaps spoken and quoted enough on the subject of authority. I do not wish to weaken the effect by prolixity; and discordant as the sound of 'authority' may be to the ear of a lively and independent woman, her respect for the word of God must be too great not to oblige her at least to ponder on this command of obedience,—a harsh yoke to the proud, but light and easy to the humble of heart."

Katherine paused a little before she replied:—"Dr. Sinclair, I am aware that Scripture commands those who are taught, to respect their teachers, that is, if they can; but, supposing that I were to concede still farther, that respect is due to all those, who, whether respectable or not, are placed in official authority, what contradictory obedience would there not be demanded of me, from the heads or pastors of each separate Church. Can I obey them all? Impossible! Yet all claim 'obedience,' 'submission,' 'subjection,' as being delegated by God. Of course, you advise me to obey the Church of England, and claim for her a precedence, a superiority over her sister Protestant communities, which perfectly shocks me! And then to urge on me the plea of one Church upon earth,—

not spiritual but visible—and that one the Church of England ! No ! you must excuse me, Warden, I could not screw up my views of Christ's universal kingdom, within the British Channel south of the Tweed ! Other Protestant communities have an equal right to this exclusiveness and self-adulation, but they are more humble, more charitable, more scriptural. The conduct of the Established Church of England towards the nonconformists and puritans, in earlier days, and her less cruel, but equally insulting, conduct at present towards the 'Dissenters,' deserve alone the condemnation which Sir James Mackintosh, in his History of England, passes on all the Protestant Churches :—' They acted as if they were infallible, though they waged war against that proud word.' In fact, I find the Church of England constantly punishing in others the disobedience of which she herself had set the first example."

"To whom, and in what, was she disobedient ?" said the Warden.

"Why, my dear Sir, if to emancipate herself from the old corrupt Church of Rome were *not* disobedience and revolt (and far be it from me to think it so), what right has she to bring the charge on those who emancipated themselves from her, when their conscientious feeling has been, as her's was, a desire for more simplicity, more purity, more close adherence to the Apostolic model ?"

“ I will tell you why, young lady—because the Church of England did not *leave* the ancient Church, she merely pruned its excrescences. This was nobly contended for by the Martyr Ridley ; it was equally advanced by Laud, in the preface to his conference with Fisher. ‘ There is no greater absurdity stirring this day in Christendom,’ says he, ‘ than that the Reformation of an old corrupted Church should be taken, will we nill we, for the building of a new.’ This essential point is also maintained by our deep theologian Tillotson, who says,—“ When the additions which the Church of Rome has made to the ancient faith, and their innovations in practice, are pared off, that which remains of their religion is ours.’ But the ‘ reformers’ from the Church of England, as those of Scotland, and of the Continent, were not content with pruning and paring ; they uprooted, devastated, demolished : and the result of their impetuous and extravagant career is this, that there is scarcely one prominent corruption of the Romish times, which may not be contrasted by its opposite error amongst the English Dissenters, and the Scottish and Continental Reformers.”

“ Doctor of Divinity, and Warden of —— College, Oxford,” replied Katherine, “ you are necessitated to say all this, and I honour you for your zealous ‘ esprit de corps ;’—but, thank

heaven, *I* have taken no vows to defend the half measures of your very conceited Church !”

“ The middle course of truth is never admired by the rash and intemperate,” replied the Warden with dignity. “ The Church of England can support, without danger, the defalcation of Miss Katherine Graham ; but will *she* willingly renounce the privilege of membership with a Church, which can lay claim to the transmission of apostolic gifts, to a priesthood uninterrupted from the first ordination by Christ, our head.”

“ But, Dr. Sinclair, you must of necessity trace this priesthood through the corrupt Church of Rome ; for my favourite friends, the Albigenses and Waldenses, in their woods and caverns, do not attempt to claim this, to me, unimportant line of priesthood ;—and this necessity of making use of the Church you protest against, this attempt to carry purity safely through corruption, this trimming and temporizing conduct, is the reason why I cannot respect the Church of England.”

“ Will you respect the words of Christ our Lord, young woman ? will your levity be awed by the promises of your God to a priesthood you would fain despise ?”—and, as Katherine remained silent, being for the moment really awed by the cold stern manner with which Dr. Sinclair pronounced those last words, he drew the large Bible

to him, and began to comment on the twenty-eighth chapter of St. Matthew, from the eighteenth verse:—"All power is given to me in Heaven and in earth. Go, THEREFORE, (observe the force of this word 'therefore,' as it expressly implies the delegated power),—go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; or, in other words, 'as my Father sent me, so send I you.' To all which St. John farther adds,—'That, having thus spoken, He breathed on them.' You here perceive that the blessed God Man used the matter and form of an express and awful gift."

"I expected here," interrupted Geraldine, "that you would have said 'Sacrament.' It seems to me, from the definition of a Sacrament given in our Church catechism, 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace ordained by Christ himself,' that from this first institution by Christ of superior gifts and grace, in favour of the Apostles, and their successors, Ordination has every claim to be received as a Sacrament. And when I think of the awful service which we have so lately read, I cannot understand why the Church of England has retained two Sacraments only,—'Baptism' and the 'Supper of the Lord?'"

“ If you will recal more of the words of your catechism, my dear, you will find, that to the question, ‘ How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church ?’ the answer is, ‘ Two only as *generally* necessary to salvation ;’ and while the Church of England holds that each sex, and every age, is bound, under awful responsibility, to receive ‘ Baptism’ and ‘ the Supper of the Lord,’ it can never be required of women, of infants, or of all classes of men, to receive this, and other institutions, called, by the Roman Catholics, ‘ Sacraments.’ ”

“ No ! certainly,” replied Geraldine ; “ it is not necessary to salvation to receive ‘ ordination,’ or ‘ marriage ;’ and I perceive that the Church of England does not positively refuse the title of Sacrament to the other institutions of our Lord. She merely speaks of those two, which all are bound to receive, and without which (*having the means and rejecting them*) we cannot be saved.”

“ For myself,” continued the Warden, “ I have ever considered Ordination as so solemn a compact between Christ and the shepherds of his flock, that I receive it as possessing the essential parts of a Sacrament. And now tell me, Miss Graham, what think you of the intention of our Lord when he said, ‘ Receive ye the Holy Ghost ?’ Did he lead the Apostles to suppose, that he conveyed to them a real donation, and yet bestowed nothing ?”

"I should never suppose any thing so blasphemous," replied she.

"Or," continued the Warden, "that Christ really did bestow what he promised, but that the Apostles failed to receive it?"

"No ! no !" cried Katherine ; "why imagine me obliged to believe either of these absurdities ? I fully believe in the miraculous gifts of Christ, and I fully believe in the reception of them by the Apostles ; for every proof is given, in the inspired pages, that these were not ordinary men. But what has this miraculously-gifted body to do with the besotted and degraded race of so-called priests, who succeeded them ? Where are the proofs of these having received the Holy Ghost ? Where are their gifts of healing, and their intuitive knowledge of languages, and all the miraculous power of the Spirit, which came on the Apostles ?"

"The priesthood," replied Dr. Sinclair, "does not claim more than the gifts conveyed in 'Ordination,' which you are confounding with those bestowed on the day of Pentecost. The former transmits, in its holy and ghostly effects, authority over the souls of men, and power to remit and retain sins. After the words, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' follows immediately, 'Whose sins soever ye retain they are retained, and whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted ;' and then, 'Lo ! I am

with you always, even unto the end of the world,' plainly extending far beyond the days of the Apostles the gifts conveyed by ordination. But when the intimation is given, *Luke* xxiv, 49, of the descent of the Holy Ghost, in cloven tongues of fire, no promise of a transmission of these gifts is given; and, beyond the favoured ones, who 'were all assembled with one accord in one place,' the Pentecostal gifts extended not. And now, Miss Graham, in reply to your attack on the Church of England, that she has, in retaining a priesthood which can only be traced through the Romish Church, attempted to carry purity safely through corruption, and that her conduct has been too temporising to command your respect,—let me say this, that you are again confounding the actual belief of the Church with the outward demonstration of that belief; or, in other words, her practice. The Church herself is to be judged of by her accredited and acknowledged dogmas of faith. The Church of England is corrupt in practice, and has been as much so, perhaps, as the Church of Rome; but, if you examine her articles, you will find her sound in principle. The Church of Rome was corrupt in practice long before she was corrupt in principle; and although it would be difficult to defend some of the dogmas of preceding councils, she was not, perhaps, really schismatic till the Council of Trent. This is the date when

those errors in practice, which had crept in, and, by degrees, had been vaguely admitted, received the fatal stamp of Church authority; and by this act of self-destruction,—listen to this, Geraldine!—the Romish Church cut herself off from the pure and Scriptural Church, and from that time became as a dead branch: while that part of the priesthood and laity who stedfastly adhered to the Apostolic model, remained, as they had ever been, the Holy Church,—the spouse of Christ. What becomes now of your assertion, that this Church, which is the Church of our favoured land, existed only through corruption?”

“Perhaps, Dr. Sinclair,” at length replied Katherine, “I had better not run the risk of displeasing you, which I certainly must, if I give utterance to all I think.”

“If you can divest yourself, Miss Graham, of your accustomed tone of irreverence, which is the fault of your Presbyterian association, you may then place your objections to the Church fully before me; for it is your tone of mind, not the nature of your opinions, which is to me chiefly reprehensible.”

“You think, Warden, that I am of too independent and fearless a turn of mind? Well! perhaps that is my tendency; but I assure you that I am now struggling for no selfish or private rights, but for those of Protestantism, as a great whole. If

I must renounce either this transmitted priesthood, this Apostolic descent, or else the Protestant Churches of Scotland, Geneva, Germany, and the respectable Dissenters of England, let me rather doubt the necessity of any distinct line of priests; let me suppose that every faithful expounder of God's word is priest sufficient to lead others to righteousness, and to be himself accepted of the Lord."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing one who was hailed with pleasure by all the party, notwithstanding the engrossing nature of the conversation: this was the former college friend of Dr. Sinclair, the learned and eccentric Mr. Everard.

"Well! my dear friends, contagion or non-contagion, here am I," exclaimed the old gentleman, entering with the spring and vivacity of youth. "Why how is this? Warden of ——, have you been laying all your college honours at the feet of Miss Graham, or have the ladies been referring to you as umpire in the Paradise of Coquettes? Red cheeks! sparkling eyes! wrinkled brow!—Come! come! in plain terms, what is the matter?"

"Controversy!" said Geraldine.

"The devil!" cried Mr. Everard, shutting his eyes tight, and putting a hand to each ear; "give wrangling to the winds. I'll none of it! Come, and ride with me on the open heath, for I have

something to show, and something to tell, under the bright sun, that shines alike on the Jew and Gentile. Ah ! my little sparkler, so you are smiling on me," continued he, while peeping from his still half-closed eyes at Geraldine, who, to welcome her old friend and favourite, had pushed aside her drawing-table, where she had listened too intently to the conversation to make much progress in her employment, and who now declared her readiness to follow his advice. The horses were accordingly ordered to the gate, leading from the flower-garden into the park, that the party might not pass through the infected body of the house. "Katherine," said Geraldine, as the servant waited for farther orders, "I believe you find the new horse too dull for you, and my uncle generally rides the favourite grey."

"What ! more difficulties between Miss Graham and the Warden !" cried Mr. Everard.

"None whatever," said the Warden, rising and bowing to Miss Graham. "I shall be happy to prove to my fair opponent the difference of concession in material and immaterial points, and the pleasure it will give me to resign to her the horse she so gracefully controls."

"Thank you, Warden, both for the pretty horse, and the pretty speech ; but what will you ride yourself?"

"The groom desired me to say, yesterday,"

said the footman, "that the General's black Valencia would be the better now for exercise."

"Well, then, I will try the charger," said the Warden.

"Like the doughty churchmen of old," observed Mr. Everard, "who, whether in battle, or following the chase, were ever nobly mounted."

"All which magnificence well became a priesthood transmitted from those who went forth with but scrip and staff," cried Katherine Graham, as she followed Geraldine, to equip for her ride; and, without waiting for the Warden's reply, — that "magnificence, however reprehensible in the clergy, had never been a dogma of their faith."

CHAPTER VI.

A dim and mighty minster of old time,
A temple shadowy, with remembrances
Of the majestic past !

Hemans.

“I AM rejoiced, Mr. Everard, that your secret lies on this side of the heath,” said Miss Carrington, as, after a long canter on the turf, they all but retraced their steps, and again approached the town and Manor Hall of Elverton. “I am rejoiced that you have made us turn our horses’ heads this way ; for, as I am sure you would not risk our entering the town, you are going to climb the Abbey Hill, and visit the ruins.”

“Everard,” cried the Warden, “if such be your intention, you must excuse my being your fellow-climber. Both Valencia and myself see the peril of attempting it, at our sober time of life. We will ruminate on the turf below ; and, if your antiquarian research should exhaust our patience, we can slowly return home by the way we came.”

“But is it really dangerous, Mr. Everard ?” said Geraldine, who loved difficulties on horseback much less than in argument. “I have little

physical courage, and this new way up to the Abbey does, indeed, appear very steep."

"Not a bit,—not a bit ! give your horse the free rein, till he reaches those furze bushes ; then turn him sharp to the left. Now for it ! who is for glory follow me !" and the energetic old man struck boldly up the steep ascent, followed closely by Katherine ; and, after some hesitation, by Geraldine and the grooms. As in most things, the first difficulties were the only formidable ones ; and, after reaching the little platform pointed out by Mr. Everard, and stopping there for an instant to congratulate themselves, and pat the favourite horses, they followed him, as he directed, up a natural or long-disused path, the gradual ascent of which allowed them to take hasty glances at the wide expanse of rich champaign country beneath them. "On ! on !" was, however, the impatient cry of their leader ; and they obeyed, till fairly under the Abbey walls. They were then allowed to rest, and to contemplate one of the most magnificent prospects ever spread before the eye of man.

"And this is your secret, Mr. Everard," said Geraldine, half delighted, half disappointed ; "this view does indeed exceed that from any other part of the ruins, and is quite magnificent. I can scarcely believe but that in the extreme horizon I can trace the sea."

“You do, you do!” cried Mr. Everard, rubbing his hands in transport; “you see from hence the western coast: but observe what a succession of faintly defined distances,—what a rich middle ground,—the tinted heaths warming and relieving the greens; and then to reflect what figures once occupied the fore-ground, moving round the hallowed building, of which just a window-frame, or ivied buttress, would contrast with the smiling landscape. Now, Geraldine, my girl, you must draw all this for me, and place me some holy man, engaged in orisons, just within the Abbey; for now we will go within, and decide whether a crumbling breach, or fretted window-arch, shall frame the future picture.”

They now entered, with their horses, into a little ruined court, whence no access to the rest of the building was discoverable, but where Mr. Everard alighted, and lifted the ladies from their horses.

“I see that your one secret contains many,” said Katherine Graham, as they in vain searched for a communication with the interior of the building. Mr. Everard’s eyes sparkled; but he did not attempt to aid them in their perplexity.

“Let us look more into these niches,” said Geraldine, striking as firmly as she could on the stone pedestal; which, however, seemed part of the solid building, and gave forth no hollow sound.

“I am delighted,” continued she, “to find that the secret has a reference to this venerable and venerated pile; for greatly as I love the simple magnificence of nature, my enjoyment in it is not complete without some association of past or future times in the history of man.”

“Well,” cried the happy Mr. Everard, “will you give up the search?” and, without waiting the reply, he beckoned the servants to him, and, with their assistance, succeeded in turning, on its concealed and well-constructed pivot; the pedestal of one of those very niches which Geraldine had fruitlessly attempted; when, to the joy of the lovers of adventure and romance, steps were seen beneath, and a faint light, from some other egress, discovered the secret communication with the interior of the ruined Abbey.

“I am quite ready to follow you,” cried Geraldine, as Mr. Everard turned round for applause at this opening to a new adventure. “I shall dream of this for nights to come: this is really a secret; but how did you discover it?”

“Ah! that I cannot reveal; therefore you must suppose it chance, or the aid of the saints, who are bound to befriend the lovers of the olden time,—for that was their golden age. No one cares for the saints now-a-days. I do not think there is a spice of poetic feeling left in England. I found my way up here one day; because, having spied a bit

of rare geranium growing just on the platform, and having urged my horse up to it, I then followed that obvious little path, which seems in fact to be no secret to the children of the town, who have, perhaps, formed it in their wanderings round the Abbey. This outer court was once, I am inclined to think, part of the covered building. But come down now with me to my hidden treasures; we can still talk there." So saying, Mr. Everard, bending his person considerably, stepped into the small aperture, and descended the stone steps, followed by his willing companions, whom he introduced into a small but exquisitely worked chapel,—the ornaments of which had not only escaped the ravages of time, and the still ruder assaults of reformation zeal, but exhibited a freshness and beauty which excited the astonishment, as much as the admiration, of the visitors. The light fell from apertures in the carved ceiling, and was sufficient to show the white marble altar, and bas-relief of the 'Lamb that was slain,' and the 'Sealed Book,' described in the Apocalypse. The workmanship of this drew from the usually severe critic, Mr. Everard, unbounded praise, followed by regrets that the large picture above the altar, of which he had had a full view the other day, when the sun was at the meridian, should now be nearly obscured. It is an undoubted Leonardo da Vinci," cried he, "and in admirable preservation. I would

not have you miss seeing this Virgin and Child for any thing. Well ! can you climb?" at length added he, laying his hand on the altar, and planting his foot firmly on the most projecting part of the bas-relief. Geraldine shrank back. "What ! my little amazon, afraid of climbing?" cried he ; "here,—I will show you how easy it is:" and, with the spring of a boy, the old man raised himself on the altar, and held out his hand to his young favourite. "I cannot ! I cannot !" exclaimed Geraldine, unable to define, even to herself, the emotion with which she beheld this desecration of the holy spot. "I know not why, but indeed, Mr. Everard, as you have seen the picture before, I wish you would not remain there."

"Ah ! you have a little superstitious feeling about an altar," replied he, as he trampled up and down, to catch the best light for the admired picture. "I believe you are right ! These are feelings which bespeak a devotional, even if mistaken, frame of —— ! Ah ! here's the point of sight. Now you may see the hand grasping the drapery : fine—very fine. Miss Graham, you must see this masterpiece,—decidedly an original,—so come up ; that is it : now take care, for the space is not large;" and thus, having assisted Katherine to mount, he continued to expatiate on the depth of colouring, and breadth of lights and shadows,—proving to his companion, who cared

little for the dissertation, that this *chef-d'œuvre* could have come from no hand but that of Da Vinci: while Geraldine stood below, looking around the dimly-lighted chapel, and lost in wonder at the state of preservation in which every thing appeared, as contrasted with the pile of ruins of which it formed an integral part. After some minutes thus spent, she again approached the altar, and, gazing with fresh admiration at the inimitable carving of the bas-relief, entreated her two friends, now about to descend, not to plant their feet on that which was a type of the Redeemer, but to regain the pavement by the sides of the altar; where, on moving, she had just discovered an opening, containing shelves, doubtless for the safe keeping of the books and sacred vessels of the Catholic service. By these they might descend; and to oblige Geraldine, as well as for their better convenience, both Mr. Everard and Miss Graham made use of these shelves, and then proceeded to the second grand secret; namely, the communication between this little hidden chapel and the renowned and frequented Abbey. But Geraldine lingered at the side where she had seen these shelves; and at length, from the remote corner of one of them, she drew forth, amidst dust and rubbish, a glove, a cluster of registers, tipped with dingy gold, and an old Missal, in Latin and English. Geraldine's exclamation,

as this last treasure appeared, drew her companions quickly back to her side ; and it required all Mr. Everard's magnanimity and benevolence to pardon Geraldine's younger eyes for having discovered these relics. He struggled, however, to forgive her, and gaily said,—“ When next I grope amongst old ruins, and renovated chapels, I shall stipulate, before I bring any fellow-lovers of antiquity to see my hobby, that no one rides but myself.”

Geraldine's quick perception instantly felt his chagrin ; and she replied,—“ Every thing in this chapel is yours, as actual discoverer. I merely petition that, at some future time, I may read and study this Roman Catholic Liturgy. I have long wished to see a Missal, but knew not whom to ask, without its being immediately reported that ‘ Miss Carrington had turned Papist ! ’ ”

“ If all reports were as prophetic,” observed Miss Graham, “ the public would be in little danger of being misled.”

“ Oh ! Katherine,” exclaimed Geraldine, “ it is you who are turning false prophetess : for there is far less danger of this result in my search after truth, than there was some days ago ; and docile as I intend to be to my uncle's instructions, how can you foresee such a termination to them ? ”

“ Because, my dear,” replied Miss Graham, “ you are listening, hour after hour, to arguments

and reasoning from that High Church uncle of yours,—all which sink deep into your mind, while they reach no farther than my temper. By his ‘decent forms,’ his transmitted priesthood, his Apostolic gifts, with his clinging to his spiritual ancestry, and his anathemas against dissent from *the* Church, he is paving the way for your easy and obvious walk into that very Church which he actually boasts never to have *left*, but only to have reformed.”

“Ha ! lies the wind in that quarter?” said Mr. Everard, as he buttoned the Missal within the breast of his coat, and fixed his eyes with great interest on the speakers.

“I must hear all my uncle’s arguments to the close,” replied Geraldine, “before I can pronounce on them. At present he has intentionally touched, but slightly, on the separation between the Roman Catholic Church and that of England. He is proceeding methodically, first, to defend the arguments of a visible and hierarchical Church upon earth, for the guardianship of the Holy Scriptures, and for the instruction of the faithful. Very possibly his train of argument may bear closely on the Catholic doctrine in this respect; but that some points of union are to annul all the points of disagreement, I cannot hope.”

“Hope !” cried Mr. Everard, with fresh interest.

“Yes,” said Geraldine, “I often wish that some timely concession, on the Catholic side, could have prevented the breach between the Churches, which every century seems to widen. But Katherine is quite mistaken in supposing that my uncle is helping me, unknown to himself, into the Catholic Church; for it is he alone who has arrested me. Disgusted with Protestantism, as it has been displayed to me, in all the lawlessness of private interpretation, and in the severity with which every new expounder condemned his brother’s vagaries, and dogmatised on his own, I had almost made up my mind to go for instruction to this Catholic priest, Father Bernard, when my uncle arrived, and Providence favoured my confidence in him. I am earnestly wishing to be satisfied with our Church; and there is, in my uncle, a calm persuasion of being in the right, which has its effect upon me.”

“Well!” cried Katherine, “I conclude that the Warden has nothing more to say to *me*; for, after winding up to that grand climax in favour of his Church, he can only now (to use his own Johnsonian terms) ‘weaken by prolixity,’ and I resign him wholly to you. Why, Mr. Everard, you have fallen into a complete reverie, in consequence of this interlude of ours! Let us now proceed with the wonders of this Popish fabric.”

“With all my heart,” cried he, “rousing

himself from his fit of abstraction. "Now for the secret communication with the abbey!" and he led his young friends to the other side of the altar, from that on which they had stood and discoursed. Here were no shelves, but on opening the door, which formed the end of the altar, a wide space was discoverable: there being no back either to the altar or to the picture. They entered, by stooping, into the obscure recess, and then, closely following Mr. Everard, ascended a small spiral staircase, which led them far above the height of the little chapel, and proved very fatiguing to the fair adventurers, encumbered as they were by their long riding habits, the more so that they were nearly in the dark, the small loop-holes which had once served to admit the light being choked by ivy and rubbish. At length they were cheered by a stronger light, and each separately emerged, after many warnings of caution from Mr. Everard, upon the dismantled but still majestic wall of the abbey ruin.

"I am convinced," said Mr. Everard, "that a passage or corridor once ran along here, in the thickness of the wall, and thus formed a communication with the interior of the abbey; though I do not wish to risk your safety, or my own, by venturing farther, especially as the wind is somewhat troublesome up here. Mark well, however, that this opening, at the top of the little spiral staircase,

is apparently the only one since we left the altar in the chapel below, and now, as you descend, keep one hand sliding along the wall, and call out to me if you feel any inequality in the surface; for there is a sliding door, which I may miss, having forgotten to count the steps down to it the other day, and passed it.—It is just at thirty feet from the chapel.”

“This is admirable for our white riding gloves,” cried Katherine to Geraldine, as they felt the outer wall in descending the damp and mouldy tower.

“Take them off and give them to me,” said Mr. Everard eagerly, “I will put them in my pocket, and your touch will be more accurate without them.”

“Thank you,” returned Miss Graham, much amused by his simplicity: “but I prefer on every occasion spoiling art to spoiling nature, and have much more respect for my hands than for my gloves.—Here is something different from the rest of the wall, however,” continued she, suddenly stopping in her descent.

“Go down then a few steps, both of you ladies, till I can feel it; for I cannot pass you in this narrow place. Ha! ha! we have it. Now, take care I do not strike you in pushing aside this door, which slides into the wall. I have counted this time—there are just twenty-two steps from the

top ; so that the tower contains just forty-two steps in all. Well done, old Everard !” cried he at length, as the reluctant panel moved in its destined groove, and left a narrow opening into a gallery, actually formed within the wall, and perfectly light from being roofless, while the footing was secure on the hewn stone. Into this they stepped, and after walking along between the two high walls, which were still of a respectable thickness, they descended about fifteen steps, and found themselves at an opening, whence (thanks to a large pile of stones and rubbish) they could easily gain the large quadrangle of the ruin ; a place well known to our party, as well as to the rest of the neighbourhood, as one of the most perfect specimens of ancient ecclesiastical architecture to be seen in that part of England ; and, in these modern times, exposed to all the pic-nic incursions of pleasure-loving parties, who, however, little suspected the fact, that in times, forming a middle age between the monastic era of the abbey and its present desecration, the ancient vault beneath the abbey church had, by the persecuted Catholics of the reigns of the Tudors and their successors, been converted into a chapel, where, at midnight, and by stealth, the ancient but prohibited service was performed,—the priest ministering at the risk of life, the hearers attending at that of heavy fines, if not of imprisonment and torture. “ Yes,” con-

tinued Mr. Everard, who gave his two auditors this account, "I have been during the past month incessantly at this spot, and am convinced of what I tell you. The common county chronicle gives the account of the sequestration of the abbey and the abbey lands, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, together with the pillage attendant on all his royal reforms. The building, however, was not destroyed, and, during the revival of Catholicity in the reign of Mary, was used as a hospital, with some attempts to restore its former privileges, which were all swept away by Elizabeth. The hospital even became suspicious, because, within cloistered walls, the establishment was merged in other institutions; and, at the supposed discovery of some 'popish plot,' the popular fury satiated itself by demolishing the whole interior of this majestic pile. Here ends the county record, and henceforth the principal interest lies in the vault beneath the chancel of the ancient abbey church, to which the access was probably from behind the high altar. Be that as it may, I have ascertained that the little sliding door, which we had such difficulty in finding, was constructed by the more modern and persecuted Catholics, as a farther means of escape, should they be pursued up the staircase from their subterranean chapel."

"And why, do you think, has this little memorable spot been deserted?" said Geraldine.

“I conclude,” replied Mr. Everard, “that unconquerable difficulties at length attended the access to it, for on the possessor of the little farm below the hill would depend the freedom of the path we mounted; and now that the established Church, thank God, has ceased to persecute the builders and benefactors of the cathedrals and churches of the land, and allows them to erect, as they can, their humble chapels, the Catholics will no longer be driven into roofs and under ground to celebrate the mysteries of their faith.”

“Mr. Everard, you speak as though you believed in those mysteries.”

“No! I do not, but my blood boils when I see persecution, either when its victims cannot believe, or when they *cannot help believing*, what passes man’s comprehension.

‘Who sees these dismal heaps, but will demand
What barbarous invader sacked the land!
But when he hears no Goth, no Turk did bring
This desolation, but a Christian king,
When nothing but the *name of zeal* appears
’Twixt our best actions, and the worst of theirs:
What does he think our *sacrilege* would spare,
Since these th’ effects of our *devotion* are!’ ”

“That voice, and those sentiments, must belong to the liberal Mr. Everard,” exclaimed some one, who had overheard the latter part at least of this quotation; and, as the party turned to identify the speaker, two gentlemen issued from behind an

abutment, which had hitherto concealed them, the younger and taller of whom, advancing eagerly to Mr. Everard, shook him heartily by the hand, when, turning to bow to the two ladies, "Miss Carrington!" exclaimed he in joyful surprise, "have I indeed the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance in the company of so great a peace-maker as my friend Mr. Everard?"

"Why, my dear," said the old gentleman to Geraldine, "do you already know Sir Eustace de Grey?"

"Indeed I do," replied Geraldine smiling, and extending her hand to the young Catholic, "but I see that Sir Eustace, by referring to a peace-maker, has not quite forgiven my attacks last year upon himself and his Church."

"I could only be honoured by the privilege of defending *myself*," replied he gaily, "and as for my Church, I am less sore than I formerly was on her account, as I see the odious mask now falling off, which misrepresentation had fastened on her matchless beauty."

"Geraldine," said Miss Graham, "it is very damp here, and I am tired to death of all these discoveries. Pray are we to stay in the ruins all day?"

"Are you really tired, Katherine? I beg your pardon, we will return home directly," replied Geraldine, who felt, by the tone of her friend's

voice, that she was vexed as well as fatigued; and Mr. Everard was now commissioned to call the servants, who had been ordered to bring round the horses to the great entrance of the abbey. As Sir Eustace held the rein of the spirited Finella, his hitherto silent companion advanced to ask him, whether another day would be more convenient for taking the measurements they had contemplated in the abbey?"

"It would, indeed, my good sir;" replied the young baronet, "at least, if you can go on without me so much the better—if not, write to me—or no—stay—I will call on you to-morrow."

"Surely I ought to know that countenance," said Geraldine, as the stranger bowed his farewell, and returned to the interior of the abbey, "perhaps I have seen him at church."

"I can scarcely think so," replied Sir Eustace smiling, "for Mr. Grantly is a staunch Catholic, and devoted also, in his profession of architect, to our poor little chapels; to attend to which he has often declined more lucrative engagements."

"What can be his purpose in taking the measurements of the ruin?" asked Geraldine; but she wished to recal the question when uttered, as her companion mounted his horse without a reply, and the little troop now slowly descended the sloping turf, until they regained the high road.

CHAPTER VII.

“Experience is the father, and memory is the mother, of wisdom.”

Spanish Proverb.

“No ! Katherine, you are quite mistaken,” said Geraldine, in the evening of that day, as the two friends reposed after their fatigues on the same sofa, while the Warden and Mr. Everard remained in the dining-room engaged in deep discourse. “In supposing Sir Eustace de Grey to influence my leaning towards the Catholic belief, you are mistaken, and wilfully so, for have I ever concealed from you any feeling of my heart ? and have you not watched the progress of reason and religion in conquering the preference I own to have felt, in more girlish days, for *that* Catholic from whom country and creed have parted me for ever ? have you not often heard me since return to heaven my thanks, that strength was given to me to steel my heart against the brilliant witcheries of Spain ; that all was over that could tempt my heart, could cloud my mind, could cast a shadow on my high resolve to know the truth ! . . . Four years ago, some conscientious scruples would have fet

tered me—now I am free, and, being so, trust me I will preserve my liberty.”

“I know too well your scrupulous integrity,” returned Miss Graham, “to suppose that your mind will be swayed, except in self-delusion: you will continue to believe yourself at liberty, and this very belief, added to the sacrifice you must make, in selecting an impoverished Catholic for the sharer of your many thousands, is exactly what would most gain on the confiding generosity of your character. I am the more annoyed by the renewal of this acquaintance, inasmuch as I had hoped that your early prepossession for a foreign Catholic had gradually been merged in a firm and warm regard for a Protestant countryman, one whom even *I* think worthy of you, one to whom your father gives his esteem, and whose religious principles have stood the test of trial and experience. Think of General Carrington’s disappointment, should he find that another romance has made you refuse the son of his old friend.”

“I hope never to refuse Lord Hervey,” replied Geraldine.

“Do you?” said Katherine, “I rejoice to hear this!”

“I mean,” continued Geraldine, “that I hope to prevent his Lordship’s ever proposing. I did so once before, for his pride and delicacy were admirably clear-sighted, and stood my friends: may they ever prove so to me! But, Katherine, let

me venture to say, that I, in my turn, must think you self-deceived in your judgment on your poor friend. Lord Hervey is a Protestant, and, therefore, you do not accuse me of being won by his coronet, a calumny of which half the world would suspect me. You have never supposed me capable of sacrificing my earthly happiness to vanity and ambition; then, oh! why suspect me of renouncing my eternal happiness to the girlish whim of a romantically sounding name?"

"No, no!" replied Katherine, "I do not think it is the mere name of Eustace de Grey, which has charms for you; but the whole romance of his position. The once immense estates of the De Greys, confiscated under the ungrateful Charles, and parcelled out, here a little, there a little, among Protestant courtiers; the honourable pride which prevents his ever adverting to his contrasted fortunes, with all those traits of generosity and pious enthusiasm with which Mr. Everard has been entertaining you ever since we parted with Sir Eustace at the park gate—not to mention that indescribable nobility and grace of manner in which I confess him to be matchless amongst your suitors All this, Geraldine, unconsciously to yourself, biasses your mind towards the community, of which you see so good a specimen."

"Suppose I were to own to you," replied Geraldine, "that notwithstanding my appreciation of those rare qualities to which you pay generous tri-

bute, Sir Eustace is too lively, too animated, too much like myself in fact, exactly to please my imagination. I like my contrasts. The pensive, the meditative, the all but sad, are those who fasten on my fancy; and, although my life has been one of nearly unclouded prosperity, yet I seem to have a prospective sympathy with the unhappy. The joyous Eustace De Grey requires no sympathy of this nature, his heart seems ever bounding and elastic."

"You have only to see him fairly in love," said Katherine, "and your fancy for the pathetic and the miserable would be gratified."

"I find then," returned Geraldine, "that I *must* satisfy your mind respecting the degree of regard I am likely to feel for this new friend. You force me to prove to you the limit beyond which it were impossible for that regard to extend. Know, then, that Sir Eustace is attached and betrothed to his cousin, the beautiful Countess Angela De Grey, a being, compared with whom, Geraldine Carrington is as nought."

"And why have you tormented me by so long concealing this good news?" said Katherine, smiling in evident satisfaction.

"Because I was told of this engagement by their aunt, Lady Winefride Blount, in strict confidence, and you must not make me repent having admitted you amongst the few who are intrusted

with the secret,—the reason for this secrecy being some still deeper secret, into which I am not admitted.”

At this instant, Mr. Everard and the Warden entered the room. Geraldine, springing from the sofa, rang the bell for coffee, and then, meeting her two valued friends with her usual playful and affectionate greeting, was instantly struck by the gravity of their countenances, and asked whether anything painful had occurred.

The Warden laid his hand on his niece's head in a kind and paternal manner, but did not reply; and taking up the evening newspaper, drew near the window, with the air of one who wishes to mark his desire to be alone. Mr. Everard, however, replied to Geraldine's enquiring looks by a smile, and, perceiving a shawl hanging near, he threw it around her, and drew her arm within his as he led her into the balcony. “Tell me,” whispered Geraldine, “what has disturbed my uncle? Does the dreadful cholera extend its ravages? Is any one else attacked amongst our people?”

“No: the official report continues much the same; and Sinclair is more at ease on your account, as he perceives your courage to be rallied, and has, besides, much comfort from this sudden change of wind, which blows from the Hall to the

town, instead of bringing us the infected vapours thence."

"Then why, Mr. Everard, did he look so solemnly in my face just now?"

"Because my sweet little friend has smiled once more on the 'Papist' De Grey."

"Oh! is that all?" cried Geraldine, "I am much relieved, and shall soon relieve my uncle's mind on that subject. I have no personal interest whatever in my enquiries respecting the authority of my own Church to decide against those doctrines of the Catholic Church, which she has taught me to consider anti-scriptural; and I shall be happy to give an account to my uncle of my former acquaintance with Sir Eustace, which has never been renewed till our accidental meeting this morning."

"And pray, then, let me be present," said Mr. Everard; "for my interest will be fully as great as his, though my anxiety will not be so painful. Tell me first, however, my dear, if I may presume on your kind partiality for your old friend,—tell me something of the progress of your mind from that ultra-protestantism into which you were conducted by your governess, Miss Cooper, of zealous memory, and which bade fair to turn my gentle, loving, and merry little favourite, into a pedantic and censorious regulator of every one's soul but her own."

“ I have promised my uncle the very account you have requested,” said Geraldine, “ so that here are two separate histories for me to enter upon, whenever you and my dear uncle are inclined to listen to what would be great egotism, were it not for the stake it involved. But, Mr. Everard, have you any objection to my questioning you on your opinion of the Roman Catholic Church ? I know you to be a member of my own Church, from your always attending the same service with us, and accepting the office of godfather to my uncle Edmund’s little boy ; but from several things, especially from your conversation this morning with your friend, Sir Eustace, I should have guessed you to be a Catholic.”

“ Just because I do not believe all the ‘ raw head and bloody bone ’ stories which have accumulated during three hundred years against the Catholics,” replied Mr. Everard.

“ It was not your freedom from vulgar prejudices, my dear sir,” said Geraldine, “ which made me listen with surprise to part of your observations to Sir Eustace ; for I too have been enlightened, by a little work of Gother’s, respecting the actual belief of our ancestors ; which belief, though it comprises more than I could bring my mind to receive, is, nevertheless, very different from that which Protestants attribute to them.”

“ Ah yes ! the Catholics are never allowed to

know their own creed; we Protestants always supposing ourselves better acquainted with it, doubtless by some supernatural intervention, as we never read or listen to what they have to say for themselves. But what struck you as strange, in my conversation this morning?"

"One thing," replied Geraldine, "was, that, in speaking of the Reformation, you called it 'the Revolt' against the Church."

"Well! and what was it?" said Mr. Everard. "Do you not know, that when a revolt is successful, it always bears some other name?"

"But my uncle will not admit that *our* Church ever could revolt; for he holds that she is the same with the Apostolical Church of the early ages, and, at the time of the Reformation, was purified, but not destroyed."

"But he speaks, does he not, of the pure Church of England *emancipating* herself from the thralldom of Rome?"

"Indeed he does, and in those very terms."

"Well, 'emancipation,' and 'reformation,' convey to my mind different images: but, be that as it may, if the spiritual supremacy of Rome was an usurpation, then use which word you please: but if not, then the great event of the sixteenth century was a revolt:—and now let us have our coffee!"

"I am rather amused," whispered Geraldine to Mr. Everard, as they re-entered her boudoir from

the balcony, "at the care with which my uncle and Miss Graham would guard me from any acquaintance with Catholics, when you are not considered dangerous—you, whose arguments and opinions would have infinitely more weight with me, from the mere circumstance of your freedom from the trammels of party. But I cannot understand your position, Mr. Everard. You are ostensibly a member of the Church of England, and yet you term her Reformation a 'revolt' against the spiritual supremacy of Rome: are you then of no outward Church? Are you independant of any authority? You puzzle me, Mr. Everard."

The old gentleman sipped his coffee for some time in silence; at length he whispered, "I have a great scheme in view—but hush!—the time is not yet ripe, though we live in glorious days Warden—what news?"

"None whatever," said Dr. Sinclair, laying down the paper.

"Then I vote," continued Mr. Everard, "that we get rid of these empty cups, and of the servants, and that we become more enlightened respecting the previous state of mind of our little favourite here, before *you* can know how far to lead her in learned research, or *I*—into my Utopia."

The Provost smiled, and shook his head, at this reference to what he considered as the offspring of the one crazy cell in his friend's brain; and, in

a short time, Geraldine was seated between her two venerable friends. Katherine Graham, being absorbed in letter-writing, was not considered of the party, and Mr. Everard paved the way for Geraldine's recital, by relating some anecdotes of her childish devotion of feeling, and of the change which he had remarked, in this respect, under the governess who had taken the principal part in her education, Madame Croisart.—“Pray, my dear, was she a Catholic, under promise never to speak on the subject of religion, or a Protestant, whose doctrinal sins were those of omission?”

“Can you ask that question,” replied Geraldine, “when my father even exceeds my uncle in his hostility to Catholics? No! Madame Croisart was a French Protestant, although she conformed in everything to the Church of England. Possibly, from having belonged to a persecuted race in a popish land, she was terrified by anything that appeared to border upon Catholicism, and checked all my bursts of enthusiasm, by dilating on the folly and danger of ‘une tête montée;’ speaking of religious emotion with contempt, and of imagination as though it were a crime! Now, as I am quite aware that true religion can exist in minds and hearts the most prosaic, I do not blame Madame Croisart for exhibiting religion, as she herself felt it to be, the dullest possible matter of pious calculation, of good sense, of propriety; a

creed, in fact, made up of negatives: but then, her positive desire that I should do her credit as a good linguist and musician, made me turn all my ardour towards those pursuits and studies against which she never warned me. Hour after hour at the harp or guitar could not make me either a papist or a methodist, the Scylla and Charybdis of poor Madame Croisart's imagination (for she had just enough to admit these bugbears): and when she returned to live with her son in France, and was succeeded by Miss Cooper, I had imbibed enough of those prejudices, to start, with undefined terror, at each opening proof given me by my new directress, of her religious fervour. But oh! the delight when these prejudices were conquered, and I awoke from the mere decencies and dull formalities of a routine which had never satisfied my heart! My uncle Edmund now took a deeper interest in me, and often fixed, in private, the impressions which his public discourses had begun. His ministry, and the exalted piety of Miss Cooper, were the means employed by my blessed Saviour to draw me to his love and service. Yes! it is the truth, that for a personal interest in all the gospel promises, I am indebted to the evangelical part of the Church of England, and I must in candour and gratitude give this testimony, although I am aware that, in so doing, I displease you, uncle. For two years I was a completely

happy being, confiding in those who led me onward in the spiritual life, with the same implicit reliance, with which, as an Israelite, I should have followed the pillar of fire in the desert. I was interested and excited, but not alarmed, at the novelties introduced and discussed by the religious world, to which I was introduced in this neighbourhood. The doctrines of the Millennium, and of the near approach of the sacred Advent, were subjects so inspiring and engrossing, that for a time I seemed to tread on air, and my very dreams were fraught with visions of the glorious future. The first blow was a difference of opinion between my two idols, followed by an estrangement which nearly broke my heart. You remember, uncle Sinclair, that pamphlet, which my uncle Edmund dispersed amongst his flock, on early baptism?"

"Yes," said the Warden, "and, with the exception of that canting phraseology, which grows on Edmund more and more, that little pamphlet was the most sensible thing he ever wrote."

"And yet, uncle, that pamphlet was the first thing which drew on him the persecution of his religious friends here."

"His *professing* friends would be a better term," interposed Mr. Everard.

"Ah! they were really religious people," continued Geraldine, "and thought him in dangerous error. Miss Cooper argued with, wept over him,

and at length resolved, that as he had deliberately broken down the fence between the Evangelical and High Church, on the essential point of 'regeneration,' she ought no longer to 'sit under his ministry;' and from that time attended the new chapel of ease in Elverton, where that very affected Mr. Oakley minces extemporally."

"And took you with her, I conclude," said the Warden, at length relaxing into a smile.

"No ! for my father was at home, and therefore I was obliged to attend the old church, where I used to weep the whole time, excepting when I was roused to sit in judgment on my uncle's 'erroneous views,' and report them to Miss Cooper, who was at that time my Pope."

"Well ! I am, at any rate, relieved, to find that the General was occasionally obeyed by this very pious lady and yourself," said Dr. Sinclair, "for allow me to observe, that filial piety appears to enter rarely into the new decalogue of these religionists :—yet, depend upon it, that, if this fail, vain is all profession of religion."

"Indeed, uncle, I confess to have been, at this time, far less attentive and obedient to my father, than when drilled by poor Madame Croisart ; for I was much elated by my supposed victory over the world, and at my clear and decided religious opinions. I was still fondly attached to my dear father ; and there was ever that about him which

commanded respect : yet Miss Cooper taught me to consider him a weak and worldly character, and myself as greatly his superior in religious experience ; and even allowed herself to tell me, his child, that she shuddered, whenever she thought of his ‘ poor lost soul ! ’ At that time I must have teased, and Miss Cooper have tortured, my father.”

“ And what said the General to all this ? ”

“ Very little. He acted up to his favourite text, — ‘ Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy ; ’ and endured every impertinence from us with marvellous patience. I read to him once, from a work which much engrossed me, the ‘ Orations ’ of Irving, to which he listened with his eyes shut, and at length said, — ‘ Thank you, my love, that will do till this day twelvemonth, when, perhaps, by bitter experience, you will have seen more into the subject of ‘ this world,’ as connected with ‘ Judgment to come.’ ”

“ Could you have extracted from your father a distinct avowal of his opinions, you would have achieved more than any one has done before you,” observed the Warden ; “ but go on with your history.”

“ I must condense it, or I shall weary you,” said Geraldine. — “ The dissensions in the neighbourhood continued — friends became alienated, congregations dispersed. Two distinct parties had been formed, respecting ‘ Regeneration ’ in Bap-

tism ;' these were now subdivided by the question of ' Assurance,' whether or not essential to salvation in the believer."

" And pray which part did Edmund play there ?"

" He took the moderate and judicious part, considering ' assurance' to be a last and crowning grace, after those of ' regeneration' and ' sanctification : ' while Mr. Oakley maintained, that regeneration could not be said to have taken place, where assurance of salvation was not conveyed to the soul."

" Thank heaven for preserving your brain ' for fresh fields and pastures new ! ' " exclaimed Mr. Everard.

" Oh ! this was not all," continued Geraldine. " Poor Mr. Oakley, who certainly could not be said to have ' zeal without innovation,' and who considered my uncle Edmund's flock to be ' hungry sheep who look up and are not fed,' would ' intrude into the fold,' especially visiting the sick and dying, to enforce this doctrine of complete assurance of salvation. This conduct deeply wounded the duly appointed shepherd, but he contented himself with mild expostulations. Not so his vehement wife, who withdrew her aid from every cottager who ventured to receive Mr. Oakley's visits, and cut every acquaintance at whose house the intruder was known to expound or to pray, till at

at length by her resentment she effected the very object which Mr. Oakley's friends had most in view, that of making him appear as a persecuted and injured man. No open breach had yet taken place between my aunt and Miss Cooper, although, since the affair of the pamphlet, great coolness had subsisted, and the once pleasant intercourse between the hall and the vicarage had become full of constraint and suspicion. But now this question of 'assurance,' and Mr. Oakley, became so identified one with the other, that few distinguished between the doctrine and the man; amongst these few, Mrs. Edmund Sinclair certainly could not be classed, and Miss Cooper, who did not hold Mr. Oakley's opinions on that subject, was nevertheless supposed to do so, as she was of the 'Oakleyite party.' The remarks of one lady were repeated, or misrepresented to the other, and open war was at length declared. Fortunately there arrived, however, a new and overwhelming cause of excitement to the professing religionists in this neighbourhood, which for a time arrested all inferior sparkles, and shone like a bright meteor distinct and alone. This was the discovered possession of miraculous gifts of tongues and of healing in the 'only true church,' of half a score of persons, principally women, who had received these gifts of the Holy Spirit!"

"Ha! Edmund was there a little singed," exclaimed the Warden.

“Yes! and a partial reconciliation took place between himself and Miss Cooper, who forgave him his doctrine on baptism by water, in favour of his awakening views on the baptism of the spirit. This reconciliation was in itself all balm and joy to me, and I was won over by this coincidence of feeling between my two friends, to trust, to listen, and to believe, till Edmund again withdrew, and, in doing so, explained to me most fully the awful risks he had run in lending himself to this heresy—for thus he scrupled not to call it. My father, too, no longer quiescent, forbade my ever meeting any of that dangerous community, and the time arrived when Miss Cooper and I were forced to part.”

“Sing ‘Oh be joyful,’ ” cried Mr. Everard.

“It was far from joy to me, my dear sir, for I not only lost with her a powerful intellect, a warm heart, and congeniality in pursuits, but I lost my prop and adviser in spiritual concerns, and, alas! I felt that I lost this friend for ever! Our forced parting was agony to both. I had by degrees lost all confidence in her judgment, and felt the double pang of having lost my trust in every human adviser: for after her departure, my poor uncle Edmund became involved in fresh doctrinal disputes; or rather, differences, for he never disputed. It was said that he held very alarming views on ‘Election;’ but I never enquired what they were.

Sick at heart, and at length indisposed in health, I withdrew from all society termed ‘serious,’ and hailed with pleasure my kind father’s proposal, to fetch my friend, Katherine Graham, from her uncle’s, in Devonshire, and then to pass some time in visiting the coast. This we did, and should have lingered at that exquisite Clovelly, where I seemed to forget all the jar of controversy, had not my father’s return home been hastened by the arrival in England of his long expected guest, Don Carlos Duago.”

“What a moment for a gallant Spaniard to arrive,” cried Mr. Everard, “just when the fair English girl had resolved to think no more of controversy?”

Geraldine coloured deeply, but replied,—“I had resolved to think no more of disputes amongst Protestants; but I had not yet doubted the truth of Protestantism. I was still bewitched by the study of prophecy, and looked on the Roman Catholic religion as the cage of every foul bird!”

“Until Don Duago warbled from it a strain of love and devotion,” again interrupted her tormentor.

“Mr. Everard,” said Geraldine beseechingly, “on this subject I am not self-deceived, and therefore I cannot deceive you. In the arguments I frequently held with Carlos Duago, I defended what I thought the truth, and the time was not

arrived when the arguments of a Catholic could move me. He had no idea, when conversing with me, of the mistaken notions I had imbibed of his Church, and I took for granted that he was contending for doctrines, from which I now am aware he would have shrunk as much as myself. We therefore argued as people must ever do, when misled as to each other's opinions, that is, most unprofitably. It was not till, on my father's departure with his young friend for Spain, I removed to my godfather's, Lord Hungerford's, that I found Catholics (English Catholics) fully aware, not only of their real faith, but also of that attributed to them, and able, therefore, to combat more successfully."

"Which new era in your life," said Mr. Everard, "leads us to the second history promised for our evening's amusement."

"And to which I also am coming to listen," cried Miss Graham, rising from her letter-writing. "I have shut my ears to the squabbles of my poor dear Evangelicals, but shall open them wide to the absurdities of the Papists."

Geraldine, however, entreated for a little rest, before she should proceed to her second controversial history, and gladly became a listener to her uncle and Mr. Everard, as they commented on the statement which she had given of the subdivisions of parties in the Evangelical world—a statement

which even Miss Graham did not attempt to contradict, and of which the leading facts were too public to require corroboration. "Listen, Sinclair, to this part of a letter in the correspondence of Bishop Jebb and Alexander Knox," said Mr. Everard, turning over the leaves of a new work, which he had brought that day as a present to his friend, the Warden. "Hear what one of those wise men remarks to the other, on the absurd notions of the religionists of the day: 'You complain of Protestantism being unsystematic. How can it be otherwise? Some grand principles of interpretation must be so authoritatively laid down that they cannot lawfully be contravened, before any thing like system can obtain. This would be the very antipode of Chillingworthian private judgment. But private judgment surely is inconsistent with the very notion of a science. How would the astronomer, the mathematician, the chymist laugh at the asserter of private judgment! Would not a person be accounted mad, were he to say, the moon *is* made of green cheese, I maintain it, I have a right to do so, it is my private judgment! Two and two make five—it is my private judgment. Gold and brass have the same weight, properties, and value—it is my private judgment! Yet this ridiculous farce is every day enacted in theology—and this is Protestantism. Is divinity then unphilosophical? Has it no principles? Is it no

science? I trow otherwise. How could any human science (I will not say) advance, nay how could it be taught, if principles were thus thrown aside? And what hopes may we not hold of the advancement of theology when principles shall be held as tenaciously as by the Church of Rome, without her accompaniment of error? This surely is a comfortable prospect.' And with these principles in our theological horizon," added Mr. Everard, "we may lean back in our chairs, and listen to the fair Geraldine."

CHAPTER VIII.

“Prejudice is ever ready to accumulate supposition upon supposition, and bury truth under the hills of its own piling.”

Whitaker.

“WHEN after the departure of my dear father I spent the summer of last year with Lord and Lady Hungerford,” said Geraldine, “I became of course acquainted with all the numerous visitors, who succeeded each other in that ‘hospitable mansion,’ as the *Morning Post* would describe it. It happened that, on my arrival, the party was not large, and the opportunity afforded of insight into each other’s opinions and characters was therefore greater. I found Lady Hungerford and most of her guests occupied with a work by a Rev. Mr. Blanco White, which placed the Roman Catholic religion in a most unfavourable light, and therefore was gladly handed from one person to another, and became the text book whence to draw materials for animated discourse. The following day, a young stranger, introduced to me and the other visitors by Lord Hungerford as Sir Eustace de Grey, asked me, when the topics in “*Doblado’s*

Letters" were again brought forward, whether I had ever met with, or heard of, the reply given to that work by a Catholic priest?" On my answering in the negative, "I expected as much," said he. "I am a Catholic, living constantly amongst Protestants, many of whom I love and respect as dear and esteemed friends; yet shall I own to you, that I find them, with but few exceptions, breaking through one of God's express commandments, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour!' As an instance in point, the calumnies written by an apostate priest, who owns that, during ten years, he acted a lie—these calumnies are believed at once and for ever, without one attempt to hear a word on the other side, before passing judgment. Every Protestant is ready to taunt me with, 'Have you read Doblado's Letters?' but when I reply, 'Yes! and have you read the answer?' the reply invariably is 'No!' So much for Protestant justice."

"Very fair! very good," cried Mr. Everard; "but you do not tell us how you liked De Grey's manners and appearance, on your first acquaintance?"

"Everard," said the Warden gravely, "my niece is very properly confining her thoughts to subjects of more importance, than those to which you would turn her attention. It can signify but little to a daughter of General Carrington, by

what vehicle is conveyed to her the substance of an opposed creed."

"I will candidly tell you, Mr. Everard," said Geraldine smiling, "that, when made aware of Sir Eustace being a practical as well as theoretical Catholic, by the days of abstinence which he strictly kept; the ride before breakfast *every* morning to hear mass at Burnleigh; the rapid sign of the cross when grace was said at dinner, with several other Catholic habits which were openly mentioned around me, I took an interest in your friend, which I should not have felt under other circumstances; for I cannot describe the strange effect produced on my mind by having the Catholic faith displayed to me by this young countryman! He was the first Catholic Englishman I ever conversed with; and to be persuaded that, in these enlightened days, a highly educated and rather satirical Englishman, could believe in the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, go to confession to a priest, do penance, invoke the Virgin, and pray for the dead;—no! it was impossible; such absurdities must have given way to the universal light bursting in even upon that wilfully dark and foolish old Church! As I found that young De Grey bore with the greatest good humour the rough Protestant jokes of Lord Hungerford, and the impracticable prejudices of her ladyship, I also ventured

to enquire, with due politeness, into the present actual belief of the Roman Catholic Church?

“‘The *present* belief,’ said he, ‘*why that which was the ancient* belief.—The Catholic Church, from her very nature, cannot change.’

“‘Alas!’ cried I, ‘how melancholy a state of things! I had often been told this of the Catholic Church, but believed it impossible, that, in spite of every warning, she should persist in such—pardon me, but are you obliged to believe *every* thing she teaches?’

“‘Certainly, every dogma; but as to matters of discipline, and of pious opinions and practices, not pronounced upon by Church authority, we may theorize as we like. But perhaps,’ continued he, ‘you will allow me to show you what we ‘Papists’ really do believe, and then, although you will pity us less, you will respect us somewhat more.’

“At night, my maid placed on my toilet a sealed packet, containing Gother’s ‘Papist Misrepresented and Represented;’ and when I look back on my then state of ignorance, I feel that I could not have received a better primer than that little work. You know, Katherine, my contempt for minds which require repetitions of arguments, and my weariness of books that are spun out with them. Here, the whole strength of the little book was in simple statements, and the whole

weakness and weariness was in my own prejudiced mind. I read, and wondered, and read again, till day-break. Every article of the Catholic creed is first 'misrepresented,' and contains the usual belief amongst Protestants, of what is the faith of a Papist. The same article is then 'represented,' and contains the actual and unchangeable doctrine of the Catholic Church."

"And why was all this so interesting to you?" interrupted Miss Graham. "We may very possibly misjudge the Quakers, or the Unitarians; yet never have you evinced the least curiosity to possess more than historical knowledge respecting these sects."

"First, Katherine, because they *are* 'sects,' and every sect is on too small a scale to satisfy my idea of the vastness, the universality, of the visible Church of Christ: next, because these, and all sects, believe less even than does the Church of England, and therefore could not tempt me. I have ever loved to be with those whose faith exceeds my own."

"I hope you are, however, aware, child," interposed the Warden, "that, if you push this idea to an extremity, you will be led into countless absurdities."

A servant here entered with a packet, apparently of books, directed to Mr. Everard, which, on open-

ing, proved to come from the object of their late discussion, accompanied by the following note :

“ Dear Sir,—Will you offer, with my most respectful compliments, the accompanying volumes to Miss Carrington ; and should they be thought worthy, after perusal, of a place in her library, I shall feel much honoured. I remain, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

EUSTACE DE GREY.”

“ Everard,” exclaimed the Warden, in a tone of deep displeasure, and laying his hand on the books, “ is it fitting that, in the absence of General Carrington, his daughter should be betrayed by those who should supply his place, and be exposed to the dangerous subtleties of a proselyting Papist, who doubtless would find his own profit in converting this only child and heiress, to the Church of which he is the champion ?”

“ I will return this answer to De Grey, it being just characteristic of that charity which ‘ thinketh no evil,’” returned Mr. Everard, while his little eyes sparkled indignantly : “ but let us first look at the books.—Ha ! Why, Geraldine, I could have lent you this work ; capital !—incomparable !—by Berington and Kirk—‘ The Faith of Catholics confirmed by Scripture, and attested by the Fathers of the five first Centuries of the Church.’”

“The five first centuries!” exclaimed Geraldine. “Oh! how delightful! how opportune! These are exactly the pure and holy ages in the Universal Church, which the Church of England receives, and which five centuries comprise the four first General Councils, which are also admitted as having been guided by the Spirit of God. During those ages, the Catholic Church, and the Church of England, were the same in doctrine. This you have fully explained to me yourself, my dear uncle: there can be, therefore, no possible danger in my taking advantage of the labours of these two Catholics, Berington and Kirk, in making extracts from the Greek and Latin writers. But how very extraordinary that Sir Eustace should have sent me a work that must confirm me in my own Church!”

“I have most assuredly told you,” said the Warden, “that our holy and Apostolic Church of England does claim those five first centuries, which the Romanists also claim. Give them up the early ages of the Church, and they may then well charge us with heresy and schism; for departure from the Church is most guilty in the sight of God, who has declared, that those who hear her not, are as heathens.”

“And how am I to be certain that I belong to that very Church, which Christ has promised to

be with to the end of the world?" said Geraldine, "I cannot trust to my own private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, having, by painful experience, seen the evil effects of this. I cannot, as an unlearned woman, search the original writings of those holy men termed the 'Fathers of the Church;' how much, then, should I be interested and benefited by reading a translation of their unanimous opinion, on each point of doctrine now contested between the two Churches."

"But do you expect," said Dr. Sinclair, "to find impartial extracts collected by Roman Catholics? Are you not thrown on your guard by the very circumstance of these extracts being sent you for the purpose of your conversion?"

"I would not read these Catholic extracts only, I would read the Protestant extracts also, compare each with Scripture, and then decide which followed most closely the apostolic model. Pray, uncle, where can I find a similar work (on the Church of England side) to this attractively sounding book?"

"I do not think I can name any one on precisely this plan," returned the Warden, "but you can consult the Fathers of the English Church, those venerated champions of the primitive faith, and, besides these sure guides, you will find, in our admirable Liturgy, a combination of whatever is sound in faith, elevated in devotion, and productive

of benevolent and holy practice. Hold but that form of sound words, and there will be but little danger of heresy or schism. The Liturgy of the Church of England may be termed the exposition of her faith, a commentary on Scripture, a treasure which cannot be guarded too carefully, or studied too deeply. Its spirit holds commune with antiquity, that antiquity for which you seek, and which gives it a rank inferior only to the Bible."

Geraldine paused, and then replied: "I see that there is no medium to the unlearned, between choosing their creed right or wrong from the Bible, or else taking their own Church completely for granted: and, in fact, the vast bulk of mankind, who throughout centuries could not read, have not had this choice, but must ever have looked on the minister appointed over them as their guide, their infallible guide. I also perceive that every teacher in these days, of those who cannot read, whether in the Established Church, or amongst Dissenters, must of necessity stand to them in the stead of God's word, and of the orthodox commentary on that word which they cannot read. Scripture never once implies it to be necessary for my salvation that I should know even my alphabet; and yet, without it, I must confide in some direct authority that cannot lead me astray."

"You are right, my dear. The minister who has been duly ordained does stand in the place of

God's written word, to him who cannot read: and if, with fervent prayer, he implore God's blessing on his instructions, he may rest assured that he will not be led into vital error."

"Do not be displeased, uncle, if I can only say that I *hope* he will not be led into vital error; for I have no assurance that he will not. I see plainly, that in every denomination of Bible Christians, Baptist, Quaker, Unitarian, Calvinist, Church of England, as well as Roman Catholic, all those who cannot read must listen to their minister's interpretation of Scripture, with the same faith as if he were inspired by the Holy Ghost. He must be to them as the voice of God. What is to become of these millions of the unlearned trusting to false teachers? Explain to me this difficulty, uncle."

"It is a difficulty, Geraldine; but with those sects and their teachers, you, individually, have nothing to do. Keep clear of abstract questions; abstain from all attempts to dive into the permission of evil; for we are told that 'offences must come,' and are, at the same time, told that 'woe will be unto them by whom they come.' Rest contented with your own easy task of obedience to the duly ordained minister, appointed over you in the pure and holy Church of England."

"Then you do believe, after all," cried Geraldine, "that our ministers, if they strictly adhere to the doctrines of their Church, are overruled by

the Holy Ghost, to direct me right. You do believe, then, that the Church of England is infallible ! Speak, uncle ! answer me, for God's sake."

" I do believe," at length returned the Warden, " that inasmuch as the Church of England approaches nearest to the apostolic model, so has she the greatest portion of God's holy spirit to direct her. Yet, in her humility, she claims not infallibility, as I will show you by reading the twentieth of her Articles, ' On the Authority of the Church.' — ' The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith. And it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's written word; neither may it so expound one part of Scripture that it may be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so, besides the same, ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation.' "

Geraldine slowly repeated the last clause of the article—" so ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for the necessity of salvation.' What ! not *any thing* ?—Not the doctrine of the Holy Trinity ? Not the redemption of mankind ? Not the joyful hope of a resurrection through Christ ?"

" Yes ! Geraldine, for those doctrines are according to the written word."

“ No ! uncle ; the first of them is not so to the conscientious Arian and Socinian ; neither is Baptism nor the Lord’s Supper to the scrupulous mind of the Quaker :” and Geraldine paused in deep thought during several minutes. Mr Everard continued in resolute silence, the Warden the same ; but just as the latter prepared to speak, Geraldine said abruptly, “ Uncle, who wrote those articles ?”

“ My dear, I thought you knew that, in the reign, and under the headship, of Queen Elizabeth, these articles, previously drawn up, were then solemnly confirmed and ratified by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Upper House, and by the subscription likewise of the Lower House, in their convocation held in the year 1571.”

“ And that convocation,” said Geraldine anxiously, “ did not claim the guidance of the Holy Ghost—did not, in plain terms, claim infallibility ?”

“ Certainly not ‘ infallibility ;’ but we trust and believe that the assistance of the Holy Spirit was given them in this re-modelling and purification of the Church of Christ.”

“ How *can* you make this distinction, uncle, between infallibility and the overruling power of the Holy Ghost in the councils of the Church ? and how can you praise as humility that want of faith in Christ’s promises to ‘ guide his Church into all

truth?' How can the convocation or council, which Christ directs, be fallible? This is not humility; this is want of faith; and I recal to mind your own instructions to me, years ago, when, on my birthday, you brought me a set of beautiful Scripture prints, and encouraged my childish comments on them. I told you that I could not understand why Esau was not praised for giving up the grandeur of the eldest son, and contenting himself with the simple hardy life he led; that I thought there was something quite equal to the philosophers I had read about in my Greek stories, when Esau throws up his birthright for the mess of pottage. You then took me on your knee, and explained to me all those promises from God, which were contained in that 'birthright,' which, not in humility and self-denial, but in impious contempt or disbelief, Esau had sacrificed to his temporal convenience: and you softened my anger against Jacob, whose face I had torn with a pin in the print of the 'Father's Blessing,' while I wept over and kissed the unfortunate Esau, by representing to me, that although the *means* were unjustifiable by which Jacob obtained the birthright and the blessing, and although God severely punished him through life for his deceit, yet the desire to obtain these blessings, the high price he set on them, the trust he showed in God's promises—*these* were most praiseworthy! and while Jacob was punished

by temporal chastisements for his fault, he was rewarded by spiritual blessings for his faith. Uncle, I have, ever since that explanation, made the distinction between a false and a laudable ambition, between distrust and humility; and I feel that I must apply all this now to the Church of England. She has not shown a laudable ambition for God's gifts. She has shown distrust, not humility, with respect to his glorious promises. She has, in fact, like Esau, thrown away her birthright of infallibility, for the mess of pottage she has gained in temporal advantages."

"No! no! child, not so fast, though you make out your case pretty closely. But I will still vindicate the Church of England from the heavy charges you prefer against her. Holding the same doctrines, and following the example of the early Church, if she hesitate in assuming to *herself* the high title of 'infallibility,' she is the guardian and defender of that which was, and is, infallible; she is the preserver of the faith once delivered to the Saints, and therefore worthy of implicit trust."

Geraldine here pressed her hand to her forehead, and remained some time silent: at length she exclaimed, "Then, uncle, I think I understand at last!—As the Church of England is, in essentials, exactly the same with the early Catholic Church of the first five centuries, inasmuch as that Church was infallible, because still pure from its apostolic

founders, so also is the Church of England; but she cannot *enforce* any thing that is not proved to have been held by that early Church, and, of course, must not *deny* any thing, clearly flowing from that Apostolic source?"

"You are right, Geraldine."

"Well! uncle, I am satisfied; and I believe, shall be now, from this time, a very high Church woman, following strictly all the rules laid down for my practice in the 'Book of Common Prayer,' and endeavouring to recall all the wandering sheep of the flock into the one fold. My next interesting task will be the study of those pure ages in Church history, with which we claim kindred and communion: and, in the meantime, I thank you, my dear kind uncle, for all your patience and trouble with me. But for you, I should have confounded our Church with the other Protestant communities; but for you, I should ere this have mistaken, as you have said, 'the reverse of wrong for right,' and have become a Roman Catholic!"

CHAPTER IX.

If God, like man, his purpose could renew,
His laws could vary, or his plans undo,
Desponding faith would droop its cheerless wing,
Religion deaden to a lifeless thing.

BOYCE.

THE Library at Elverton Hall had once been the principal room in the old mansion; the noble suite, comprising saloon, anti-rooms, and dining-room, with the conservatory, having been built by General Carrington's father, together forming a somewhat uncouth wing, every thing being permitted to the irregular order of the Elizabethan or old manor-house style, in which the building had been encased. The original date was far anterior, and to this date belonged the library and noted hall, the latter reaching, with its midway gallery, to the top of the building, and exhibiting specimens of oak-work and of painted glass, that still excited the admiration of the connoisseur, and subjected its owner to the penalty of appointing one day in the week, in which visitors, conducted by the late housekeeper, Mrs. Goodwin, were permitted to view this hall, and, as the good woman termed them, the "state

apartments," in which the spacious and well-filled library was included. No visitors, however, had approached since the raging of the cholera, and Geraldine fearlessly descended, on the following morning, by her private staircase, to the library, to look over the list of books, and bring back to her uncle an account of the various ecclesiastical histories there to be found. Having read the catalogue, she had just mounted one of the moveable steps, which, like a pulpit and its stair, were in each corner of the room, when she perceived Mr. Everard suddenly arrested, and gazing at her with eyes extended and with lips apart.—Greeting him gaily from her elevated station, Geraldine bade him mount, and help her to remove from their shelves the works she required; but Mr. Everard stirred not, and called to her not to change her position, and, above all, not to look at him, with which seemingly capricious and unaccountable request Geraldine complied, during a few seconds; after which, having secured the first volumes of Fuller, Mosheim, and Milner, she slowly descended the steps, and stood by the side of her old friend. "Ah! those eyes," cried he, "they spoil every thing! When they are turned away, and as you stood just now, I thought I saw your mother, as she used to stand, full twenty years ago, mounted upon those very steps, forgetting even to bring away the treasure of learning

she had found, and there she would read motionless for hours. Ah ! that was a mind which from its very fullness was enlarged to boundless charity. You inherit from her, Geraldine, this eagerness for knowledge—but you live in better times.”

“ And what was the theological result of these deep studies of my beloved mother ?” said Geraldine, her dark eyes filling with tears, which moved the old gentleman to forgive their shape and hue.

“ The result,” said he, “ led her to accompany me to my Utopia : but alas ! the thread of her sweet life was snapped !—Ah me ! we will talk of other things, girl.—Tell me the present state of your mind ?”

“ Why it is this,” said Geraldine : “ I am bound to believe, till I am forced to disbelieve, that my Church is the pure Apostolic Church of those early centuries, which were undeviatingly faithful to the doctrines preached by the Apostles. I am wishing, therefore, to establish this truth on my mind, by reading Protestant Church History again, with deeper attention than when in the school-room. My uncle Edmund presented me, years ago, with Milner’s History ; but the Warden tells me that Joseph Milner, though a well-meaning man, is a weak historian, and recommends Mosheim. I therefore intend to read both ; and, as facts are my aim, and not sentiments, I care not who is high or who is low Church.”

“Mosheim was neither,” said Mr. Everard; “he was a Dutch Lutheran, and the work is dedicated to his patron, the Prince of Orange.”

“Better and better!” cried Geraldine; “he will then be impartial, as far as the Church of England is concerned. But how strange it is, Mr. Everard, that my uncle should be liberal enough to recommend the historical accuracy of one, whose Church, on the awful question of the Eucharist, differs so much from the Church of England?”

“Ah! not so much,” replied he, “as would appear in the cavils of controversy. My theory is, that, if those of opposite creeds would but calmly listen to the statement of those apparently opposed to them, there would be but little discordance left in the world.”

“But surely, Mr. Everard, between the Protestant and the Romanist——”

“Do not call the Roman Catholics by any nickname, unless, in return, you can bear yourself to be called ‘heretic.’ The Universal Church, in communion with its chief bishop, the Roman Pontiff, takes the title of Catholic, or Roman Catholic, and between this Church and that of the Reformed Church of England, there is so little difference, that I verily believe, if the Pope had, in the sixteenth century, understood the limits of his temporal authority, as

well as he now understands them, and if our kings had never been blindly flattered into the usurpation of the spiritual authority, and if, also, matters of mere discipline had been treated in a spirit of mutual concession, I say, we never should have had to mourn over this rending asunder the seamless robe of Christ."

"Still, Mr. Everard, you must allow, that the differences between the Churches comprise more than a misunderstanding of terms, or a mere quarrel of supremacy."

"Not at first," replied he. "All that Luther wanted, was a reform of abuses—and *there* he was right; as in our times, the friends of the Establishment are very justly wishing for the same reform of abuses. But watch the progress of all these reforms, when they shall be *forced* upon the Church by the indignation of the people, instead of being wisely and promptly undertaken by the rulers. You will find that, not content with doing away with pluralities and sinecures, and the surplus riches of the Church Establishment of England, the Liturgy will be attacked,—first abridged, then abolished,—the Sacraments considered empty forms,—and the Lord of Misrule will gain the ascendancy, and put all to the rout, because our Leo the Tenth and his cardinals will not see their danger—a danger, all the greater from the taste

of reform which this nation has already had, and which, like the taste of blood to the wild beasts in the arena, excites to more."

"And what will be the end of all this?" said Geraldine.

"The bringing in of my Utopia," replied Mr. Everard.

"Or, in other words," returned she, "that universal Millennium, which was once my own day-dream."

"Not exactly," said he. "That belief of the coming thousand years of blessedness, which, at the end of the tenth century, caused trade to languish, and buildings to fall in ruins unrepaired,—which, reviving with sectarian fury in the civil wars of England, again sank into obscurity, until these days, prolific with excitement,—that belief was connected with the second Advent of our Lord, and the Millennium expected to be a dispensation wholly miraculous. Now, my Utopian scheme is simply this—That a learned and dispassionate deputy should be sent from each Protestant community, to confer with a Catholic peace-maker from the papal court: that, on the part of Rome, *every* point of mere discipline, repugnant to the different national habits and feelings of those so long estranged, should be conceded: that the Liturgy, for instance, should be recited in the vernacular language of each nation, the marriage

of the clergy allowed, and Communion in both kinds permitted:—while, on the side of the Protestants, there should be a readiness to sacrifice each something for the common harmony; and having experienced how little the mere protesting against Rome has done for the promotion of their faith and piety, let them reflect that in an Universal Church, including various nations, national asperities should melt in brotherly love.—Let each nation have a representative at Rome, where, for the sake of the inestimable blessing of unity, the head bishop may reside; and, as there can be but one head, let no pitiful jealousy, under the name of national pride, prevent a decent respect, and official obedience, being rendered to him, who, at least, is as capable of giving aright the casting vote in ecclesiastical councils, as our own lay sovereigns; especially, when it is recollected that we may have, in consequence of hereditary succession, a woman or a child for the head of the English Church.”

“Ha ! Everard,” exclaimed the Warden, who had entered the library at this his accustomed hour, and had overheard the last sentiments uttered by his friend, “you are harping still on that old chord—the union of the Protestant communities with that of Rome, a chord which jarred in the hands of Bossuet and Leibnitz, never again to make ‘sweet harmony.’”

“Pardon me, Warden, that chord of harmony

shall be re-strung, in days ripe for such glorious peace-making. In the time of the great Leibnitz, there was still too much ferment in the minds of men, to suffer the Lutheran Church to avail herself of the immense concessions made by the Bishop of Meaux ! Concessions embracing every point of discipline ; while, on the two grand articles of Protestant separation, namely, the ‘Eucharist,’ and ‘Justification,’ the combatants had only to explain calmly and clearly their real belief, and the difference in faith which remained was but the shadow of a shade.”

“ It was Molanus, not Leibnitz, who was then engaged with Bossuet, each as the voice of his party,” rejoined the accurate Warden.

“ I know it,” said Mr. Everard, “ but hang the mere name of a man :—it is as the voice of his Protestant community, that his testimony is chiefly valuable.”

“ To me,” said the Warden, “ these several approaches to re-union, and these several failures, prove that, if, after dispassionate and friendly enquiry, the separation still continue, there must be solemn articles of belief on either side, which no conscientious mind can relinquish ; and I own,” continued he, while he crossed his arms resolutely, and drew himself up to his full height, “ I have no opinion of your conceders, of your explainers away,

of your approximators, and amalgamators, of vitally opposed doctrines."

"Well ! well ! Sinclair, but you will allow that they are the little, ignorant, and conceited minds, which heap the mounds of separation ; and that, if people would but understand each other's real faith, it would be found that the actual differences are but few."

"They are few, Everard, but they are gigantic ! I honour, with you, that loftiness of mind, that wide range of vision, which fixes on the great and the essential, leaving to the vulgar crowd the 'mint' and the 'thyme.' Bossuet conceded the points of discipline, but knew too well the awful thunders of his Church, to tamper with her faith. Let the upright and conscientious, on either side, respect each other, but never attempt the impossible task of union."

"Certainly, never attempt that which is impossible ; but I persist that a union is not impossible."

"Tut ! tut ! Everard, a truce, for pity's sake," cried the Warden, settling himself into his morning's course of reading, while his friend strode up and down the room ; and Geraldine, finding, on opening the first volumes of her three histories, that Milner appeared by far the most interesting, retreated with that book to her boudoir, and was occupied by it till the hour for her daily ride.

She was deeply engaged in the same work, when the little party met in the evening; but Mr. Everard requested some music, and when, at the expiration of an hour, Geraldine was allowed to rise from the instrument, it was on condition that she should not read, but talk. "Come, come!" said he, "these are the little trials of temper, perhaps the only real ones which cross the path of the fair nymph of Elverton. As for parting from broken-hearted adorers, or running into controversial deliriums, there is flash and dash about all that, of a vastly imposing nature; but, trust me, that to leave Milner and the early saints, for the sake of sitting by an old sinner, to cheer and soothe him, is worth all your high tragedy."

"May I listen while you speak?" said Geraldine, laughing, as she leaned back on the sofa near her lively old friend.

"No! Tell me first to what you alluded, during our ride this morning, when you spoke of the Protestant father confessor, who had given you such warnings, and described such dangers, without, however, providing for you either remedy or resource?"

"I was referring to a clergyman of the Established Church," replied Geraldine, "whom I met in London during the last season; when having, in addition to Sir Eustace De Grey's defence of his Church, listened repeatedly to that of his aunt,

Lady Winefride Blount, and become curious to hear more, I overheard this Rev. Mr. P——, in conversation one evening, at a serious party at Lady Lucy Foster's, make some comments, which I never forgot. 'The present state of the Protestant world,' said he, 'is one of curious contemplation to the philosopher, and one of deep anxiety and pain to the Christian. Infidelity stalks over the land, and will persecute where it dare. The Romish apostasy was superstition and idolatry; the Protestant apostasy is infidelity and anarchy. Each contains in its vital constitution the seeds of these corruptions and abuses. The Romish persecutions have been dreadful, but the infidel persecutions will be far worse; inasmuch as an idolator feels himself responsible to his false god, and the infidel is responsible to nothing.—A God obscured is better than a God denied! . . . The Roman Catholic Church is right, respecting the *power* of miraculous gifts in the Church of Christ. There is a constant misapprehension respecting the *power* and the *exhibition* of miracles. If miracles were needless, except in the revelation of a new dispensation, why did they continue in the Jewish Church after it was firmly established? Can it be supposed that God would bestow his gifts less on the Christian, than on the Jewish, Church? Miracles *are* granted to a faithful Church.' Much struck by these remarks, I requested to be intro-

duced to this clergyman, to whom every one seemed to listen with as much attention as myself; and from that evening Mr. P—— became a frequent visitor in Berkeley Square. I had hitherto frequented the chapel in —— Street, where I had always been interested and instructed, and where Mr. P—— had himself occasionally officiated; but my new adviser now warned me against the dangerous doctrines that were gradually creeping in at M—— Chapel, without being able, however, to fix for me whither to go instead: ‘For,’ added he, ‘the evangelical body is at present so infected with various heresies, that I know not where you would be safe.’ ‘As a resident in Berkeley Square,’ said I, ‘my parish church is St. George’s; but all my religious friends assured me, that from the High Church party I should hear nothing that could improve me.’ ‘Very true,’ replied Mr. P——; ‘you would never hear the true Gospel from any of the preachers at the great West-end churches. However, do not let this state of things lead you into dissent; for much as I may warn you against the parties in the Church, I doubly warn you against the dissenters. I have passed much of my life amongst them, and you may trust my experience, that their pride and arrogance are perfectly anti-christian. No!’ added he, ‘the more intercourse I have held with the dissenters, the less I have liked them:—keep clear of them!’”

“Ha !” cried the Warden, suddenly roused from a reverie, “a sensible man that:—who was he?”

“The same man, my dear sir, who assured me, that I could never hear the true Gospel from the preachers of the High Church.”

The Warden was again silent and abstracted, and Geraldine continued. “Mr. P—— then enquired whose ministry I attended, when in the the country? and, on my speaking of my dear uncle Edmund—of his piety, his zeal, his usefulness— ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘Edmund Sinclair is a good man! we were friends at Cambridge—both at that time staunch Simeonites: but take care of his notions on ‘Election,’ for he has a considerable twist on that point.’

“‘Positively, sir,’ cried I, equally vexed and amused, ‘as I am in such imminent danger from those of my own communion, I had better take refuge in the Catholic Church, where no difference of religious opinion is permitted.’

“‘The *Roman* Catholic Church, you mean,’ replied Mr. P——. ‘No!—you must not take so wild a step as that would be. You must not leave the pure worship of God for all those awful superstitions. The Romanists, however, have the right on their side in many things. They have indeed. But now,’ added he, ‘Farewell! for I must leave London within an hour:—Farewell!’

read your bible, pray fervently, and rest satisfied that the ‘assurance of faith in the believer,’ is the highest perfection in the Christian course, and a foretaste of the time when Christ will be all in all.’

“ Thus ended my conferences with Mr. P——, for I have never seen him since: but truly may he console his conscience by the recollection, that, into whatever mistaken community I may hereafter enter, or whether I remain in my own, he has given me warning against every one ! Of course, however, he left me more bewildered than ever, and I was not made more tranquil by my return hither, some weeks after, where the religious dissensions to which I have alluded, continued at their full height. In some long and interesting conversations with my uncle Edmund, in our evening walks, he unfolded to me his many trials in the ministry,—the want of confidence amongst his parishioners, who were all more ready to teach than to be taught,—the want of cordial support amongst his brother clergy, some suspecting him of erroneous doctrine he had never held, while others were jealous of a popularity he had never sought, and which had proved as evanescent as it had been unprofitable. I had not the cruelty to tell this dear persecuted being of the charge made against him, of erroneous doctrine, by his friend Mr. P. ; nor did I in the least care what his views on Election might be. All the

truth and warmth of my sympathy were his. I forgot to speak of myself, I thought only of the unhappy destiny of this pious and devoted child of God, as he continued to give me his confidence; a confidence, part of which I hold sacred now and for ever. After this I consulted no one, and endeavoured to persuade myself, that differences amongst Christians on doctrinal points, signified but little, provided they held that of the Redemption, when my attention and interest were awakened afresh by the establishment, in Elverton, of a branch Reformation Society, which was the first announcement to me, and to hundreds besides, that Catholics existed in the county and county town."

Mr. Everard smiled, and observed,—“ I asked a Catholic Priest, the other day, to what he attributed the extraordinary revival of Catholicity in these days? To which he replied,—‘ Under the blessing of Almighty God, first to the cholera, next to the Reformation Society !’

“ But,” continued Geraldine, “ just let me recapitulate the various parties in the neighbourhood, who each thought themselves alone in possession of the truth, and their opponents in vital error; and then, imagine the leaders of these parties, meeting in committee, and holding forth on platforms against the ‘ common enemy,’ when, had the conversion of any one Catholic been the con-

sequence of their ‘much speaking,’ they would inevitably have driven their convert distracted, by the various plans offered him for his salvation. I never yet have been guilty of a caricature; but I cannot help sketching mentally the new-made Protestant, surrounded by his reformation friends, each dragging him a different way. ‘Regeneration,’ ‘Election,’ ‘Sanctification,’ ‘Perseverance,’ ‘Assurance,’ had split the Elverton world into five parties; so that the hapless convert must have been more than quartered to have contented them!”

“No such catastrophe, however, occurred,” said Mr. Everard: “for, some months ago, I questioned the principal leaders respecting the effect of their two years’ labour, and they replied, that they trusted that the bread thus cast upon the waters, would come up in course of time, and that, to strengthen and confirm the faith of Protestants, was, in these perilous times, worth all the labour and expense of the meeting; but they acknowledged no conversion to have taken place at Elverton.”

“It was an important era in my mental history,” said Geraldine, “this first Reformation meeting; for it led to my knowledge of the hitherto unknown Mr. Bernard, the Catholic priest. But all this I must reserve for to-morrow, for I hear the servants assembling for evening prayers, and my uncle has

instinctively awoke. Katherine, the prayer-book is by you."

"Oh ! that eternal Liturgy !" ejaculated Miss Graham, in a whisper, to Geraldine, as the latter placed the venerated book on a small table near the Warden, and all knelt in prayer.

CHAPTER X.

“When you are all agreed upon the time,” says the curate,
“I will make it rain.”

Italian Proverb.

“WELL !” now for some more scenes from the ‘reformed world,’ said Mr. Everard, as, on the following morning, he again obliged Geraldine first to sing and then to talk.

“Shall I give you,” returned she, “a description of the last party I was at, termed ‘serious,’ and which immediately preceded my determination to become acquainted with Mr. Bernard ?”

“To be sure I will have it,” said the old gentleman ; “and pray be graphic and methodical.”

“Then I must first acquaint you, my dear sir, with the existing plan, amongst the pious families in Elverton and its neighbourhood, to meet every Wednesday at the house of each in turn, and to invite the clergymen of the place to attend alternately, in order to read and expound a chapter of the Bible, at the close of the evening, followed by an extempore prayer, and generally a hymn.”

“And what preceded this ?” said Mr. Everard.

“ Oh, everything in proper keeping—sober conversation, and plenty of tea and tea-cakes.”

“ What do you mean by sober conversation? All those deep subjects which run so lightly off your tongue, and were settled in a trice by yourself and Miss Cooper, while they are approached with the profoundest awe by learned theologians, namely, those of ‘ Regeneration,’ ‘ Election,’ and so on?”

“ Exactly so,” replied Geraldine, blushing at the remembrance of her former flippancy and presumption. “ The most awful points of doctrine were discussed by the youngest of my sex at these parties, nor did this strike me at the time as unseemly, except once, when, having arrived late one evening, an old lady politely made room for me by her, and, wishing to make my introduction easy to the many who were strangers around me, said graciously and smilingly, while she handed me some tea, ‘ We were just speaking, Miss Carrington, of the *Eternity* of punishment in hell,—what is your view of the subject?’ ”

“ Impossible!” cried Mr. Everard.

“ Not at all impossible,” said Geraldine; “ for this actually occurred,—and the eternity or non-eternity of the divine wrath was a sixth point of disagreement in the Elverton world, which I forgot to mention.”

“ Well!” sighed Mr. Everard, “ tell me about this

last party, and then let us have done with these people for ever."

"This last party," continued Geraldine, "was at the house of a lady who, during the summer months, delighted in showing hospitality to those London preachers who had benefited her soul during the winter and spring. And on this occasion she had secured, to her great transport, the three most celebrated 'lions' of the day. Benevolent and expansive in all her feelings, she desired that her country neighbours should partake in the religious excitement which gave herself such occupation; and my friend, Miss Graham, was invited with me to spend a long evening at the Grove. Poor Katherine had anticipated much pleasure from this 'long evening;' but, unfortunately, we were separated soon after our entrance, and she was seated near some ladies who would not speak to her, because, as they afterwards confessed, they had mistaken her for 'another Miss Graham,' who was supposed to hold very alarming views on the doctrine of 'miraculous gifts!' I was conducted by Lady S—— to a place near the three celebrated preachers and divines, who were endeavouring to feel happy and at their ease; but my next neighbour informed me, in a whisper, that neither of them had wished to meet the others! Two of them had been bosom friends, but had become estranged on the subject of the Apocryphal Books

being disseminated by the Bible Society: while the third reverend brother dreaded himself, and was dreaded by the others, on the awful subject of the ‘humanity of Christ.’ The conversation, therefore, between these talented and really pious men, was guarded and constrained. No spirit, no frankness, no eloquence. Fortunately, however, for themselves and the listening assembly, the daring attempt of a Catholic priest to hire a room in Elverton for the purpose of a temporary chapel, was mentioned by one of the company. Instantly all brows were cleared; the reverend trio looked confidingly at each other; the delusions, the dangers, the alarming increase of Popery, were so many safety valves for their own uncomfortable feelings, and the conversation became as animated as it was friendly. I listened to anecdote after anecdote, respecting public controversies, wherein the Popish priest was always foiled in his sophistry by the spear of Protestant truth! Then followed some accounts of conversions to the ‘truth’ of even the priests themselves; and all wound up by histories from Ireland of Popish delusion and of Popish cruelty, so well vouched for, and of such recent occurrence, that the amusement and excitement of the evening became quite inspiring! All crowded round the alternate speakers, and actually forgot ‘clear views’ and ‘sound views’ on doctrinal points, till, the clock announcing the hour of ten,

the lady of the house, and several of her female coadjutors, collected for the purpose of a whispered consultation, as to which of the holy divines should be requested by her ladyship to expound the chapter on that evening. Again was to be distinguished the condemnation, 'not sound : ' then, after more consultation, the next choice was followed by the demur of, 'perhaps not *quite* clear ; ' till, at length, Lady S—— broke up the conclave, by approaching the once more uneasy trio, and requesting Mr. D. (who had been voted the most trust-worthy) to favour the meeting by reading and expounding a chapter. The servants entered, the circle was formed ; when the lady next me informed me that herself and all her '*really* serious friends' were very curious to know how Mr. D. would get over his exposition in presence of Mr. B., as he was aware that the latter gentleman avowedly thought him not sound on the doctrine of 'assurance.' Well, then we had the usual touchstone of Calvinism, the eighth of Romans ; some part of the exhortation, after the commentary, was very beautiful, the prayer still more so ; but when all the good ladies arose from their knees, and, instead of retiring in silence and humility, collected, as was their custom, in little criticising knots, to discuss what had just been uttered, I hurried Katherine away, and have since declined every serious party."

“God help all these poor foolish women and their leaders, that they may not turn quite crazy,” sighed Mr. Everard, smiling while he sighed, “and so the end of all this was, that you resolved to become a Catholic.”

“No ! not ‘resolved,’—but the ‘middle path of truth,’ as my uncle calls the *real* Church of England, was actually unknown to me, although I was regularly baptized and confirmed one of its members. Nor is this to be wondered at; for the evangelical body in that Church were those who guided me, and from them I learned to consider all forms as bondage, all *reliance* on the sacraments as superstition; and when I opened my eyes to the error of my guides, I thought, in my ignorance, that there was no alternative to be found from their endless vacillation, but in the immovability of Catholicity.”

“Well, you were not wrong there, for the *real* Church of England, as you call her, ought to be as immovable as the Universal Church, of which she is essentially a part.”

“Yes ! I see this now, since my uncle’s explanations; but I was then ignorant of the high claims of my Church above those of other Protestant communities.”

“And now,” said Mr. Everard, “if you follow my advice, you will not puzzle yourself any more with either controversy or history. I do not mean

that you should not read, if you please, the several Church records which come in your way : but, if you expect to find, from Milner or Mosheim, that, in the first five centuries of the Church, Christians believed just the doctrines of the thirty-nine articles, and nothing more, you will be disappointed, and your mind again unhinged."

" Indeed !" exclaimed Geraldine. " Do you mean that my uncle spoke in ignorance, when he led me to suppose that the doctrines of my Church were exactly those of the early Christians ?"

" The Warden is ignorant of nothing," replied Mr. Everard, " and doubtless will explain to you, when he sees fit, the reason why the Church of England has, in some few respects, followed her own view of Scripture, instead of the example of the primitive Christians. In the meantime, your duty appears to me to be plainly this—remain in that community of Christians where Providence has placed you ; and never think of leaving it on account of its short-comings, *until* you shall have acted up to all that it professes to enforce. This will be but justice to your Church, and proper respect to your uncle, who is deeply solicitous on your account. Believe me, that, if you really thus act up to all that your Church inculcates, you will be so nearly a Catholic, that, excepting the points of union with Rome, and the sacrament of Extreme Unction, you will be essentially a member of the

Universal Church, and need contemplate no change."

"I do not care for Rome, or the Pope," returned Geraldine; "but I often wish to know what reason my Church can give for rejecting that sacrament of the dying, called by Catholics 'Extreme Unction.'"

"Well now! will you be quiet, and trust your Church, as I bid you, at least for a time?" said Mr. Everard. "Just simply obey her, and you will have enough to do."

"For how long a time?" inquired she laughing; "till your scheme is ripe for the union of the Churches? Well! I will be obedient—*almost* as obedient as a Catholic, till I can see my way more clearly; for I own," added she gravely, "that, at present, I am bewildered with having thought too much. I will now think no more, but pray—and act."

From this time, Geraldine determined to love, to admire, to be satisfied with her Church and its ministers, to hope for a revival of its energies, and to labour indefatigably for the re-establishment of its ancient discipline. Having a perfect guide for practice as well as doctrine, in her Book of Common Prayer, she copied thence the table of vigils, feasts, fasts, and days of abstinence, to be observed in the year; and, in the innocence, or roguery, of her heart, determining to please her orthodox

uncle, by strictly following the rules of the Church of England, both for him and for herself, she sent directions to the astonished cook, that no meat should be served on the following days,—namely, the eves or vigils before the Nativity of our Lord, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost, St. Matthias, St. John Baptist, St. Peter, St. James, St. Bartholomew, St. Matthew, St. Simon, and St. Jude, St. Andrew, St. Thomas, and All Saints ! Also on the days of fasting or abstinence, namely—the Forty Days of Lent, the Ember Days at the four seasons, the Three Rogation Days, and all the Fridays in the year, except Christmas Day. Here were, indeed, fasts and abstinence enough ! With respect to the feasts, there was no difficulty in either providing or consuming the “fat of the land :” but for spiritual food ! alas ! it was hopeless to expect any “good Protestant” to give up an hour’s labour or merchandise to praise God and honour him in his saints ! Geraldine’s round of visits, with Mr. Everard, to the clergy in the neighbourhood, entreating them to open their churches on the week days, to commemorate the apostles and the saints, only drew forth excuses from some, jokes and hearty laughter from the rector, Mr. Thornhill, and a smile from even his zealous curate ; although the latter qualified his smile by

saying, that he should be glad of any opportunity to draw his flock together for public worship, and to hear a faithful exposition of God's word, but not to commemorate any mere creature, while he also thought, that to have the Church service so often repeated would only produce weariness in the people.....“ If,” added he, “ I were allowed to use extempore prayer——”

“ Extempore prayer !” cried the rector, “ never let me hear that again, sir ! Extempore preaching, sir, is as much as I can stand in my parish, and I have had too much of that already. But extempore prayer ! God bless my soul !——”

“ Indeed,” replied the curate, “ I much doubt if Paul and the Apostles would have authorized any other.”

“ Mr. Brown, neither you nor I have any thing to do with the Apostles, and all that cant. Keep to your Church, sir.”

“ I do keep to my Church, Mr. Thornhill ; and, in her earlier and purer days, it was not orthodox to have a written sermon ; I have therefore full liberty to preach extempore, though perhaps restricted in the prayers.”

“ And a very good thing that restriction, Mr. Brown ; let the people keep to the Church prayers.”

“ I too have often wished,” said Geraldine, “ beautiful as is our Liturgy, and adapted, as it is,

in its several parts, to our different conditions of mind, that some occasional variety were permitted in the Church service, especially as it is so very long; and, in this reluctance to open the churches during the week, there may be some just apprehension that no one would attend, owing to the weariness produced by this constant repetition."

"No!" said Mr. Everard, "this cannot be cause sufficient; for I have often watched Catholics on their knees for an hour together, with not a symptom of weariness either of mind or body, when the only change of prayer was, from the 'Our Father' to the 'Hail Mary,' and back again to the 'Our Father.'"

"Ah! poor creatures," said Mr. Thornhill, shrugging his shoulders; while the curate rejoined, "Thank God! we are at any rate free from these vain repetitions."

"Take care, sir," cried Mr. Everard, "what it is you thank God for. Remember that He has taught us *but one prayer*, which is the very one you are pleased to thank Him you feel no inclination to repeat oftener than once or twice a day. Rest assured, sir, that many a poor simple peasant has gone straight to heaven, who never framed any other form of words. Well?"

Mr. Brown looked confused, and replied, "that he had not intended to attack more than the unmeaning repetition of what he perfectly acknow-

ledged to be a model for all prayer ; and that he had used the Scriptural expression, ‘vain repetition,’ principally with reference to the ‘Ave Maria,’ which he must not only consider a false worship, but which was also reprehensible from the simple fact of its repetition.”

“Come, sir ! we will keep to the repetition, and leave the joint address of the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth for another time. Now suppose a poor creature with more heart than head, kneeling down from sorrow, or gratitude, or joy, or what you please, and addressing his God. Well ! he lifts up his heart, sir, and if God hears no words at all, or hears nothing but the prayer He himself taught him, that hour’s prayer is accepted—I’d stake my life upon it. What ! does God require in His plenitude and all-sufficiency the tinklings and turnings of our petty eloquence ! I trow not.”

“Still, Mr. Everard, the words of Christ are plainly these, ‘Use not vain repetitions, as the Heathens do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.’ ”

“Well, sir ! I am defending repetition when the heart is full, for this is nature. I am not defending repetition when the heart is empty, for this is hypocrisy, and is the ‘much speaking,’ and the no feeling, which our Divine Teacher reprehends. But now, to the subject of our visit to our good

friend the Rector, namely, the having an early service in both the parish church and chapel of ease, at seven or eight o'clock, for the people, before they go forth to their day's work. Suppose we fix on the Psalms and Lessons for the day, with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, Creed and Lord's Prayer, which would occupy between twenty minutes and half an hour. What say you to granting this, Mr. Thornhill?"

"Upon my word, Everard, you get on so fast," said the Rector, taking breath, "you leave one no time to ponder. These things require time, and, above all, the consent of the bishop. In these times, any innovation—"

"*Innovation!* my good sir; *revival* you mean, in correct language. There was a time in England, when every mechanic, and every peasant, before he went to his daily labour, knelt before the altar of his God. A daily service is as orthodox as your bands and shovel hat, and you require no leave from the bishop to unlock the church door, and do your duty."

"And pray who would come?" replied the Rector, good humouredly laughing at the old gentleman's warmth, "I should most assuredly have to address solely my clerk, and, like Dean Swift, begin—'Dearly beloved Roger!' No, no! my honest quixotic friend, leave the poor people to kneel by their own bed's side, and then go quietly

out to their daily work, till Sunday, when they can have praying enough, and, God knows, preaching more than enough."

"Well, Thornhill, I will not hurry you; send me your answer this day week. But, remember, it is an awful thing to assist, by one's own negligence, in the downfall of one's Church; and that the Church of England is tottering no one can deny."

At this instant, Mrs. Thornhill entered the Rector's study, full of amazement that Miss Carrington had not been ushered into the drawing-room; and the explanations and compliments between the ladies ended in a visit to the greenhouse, and a walk round the grounds—Geraldine little suspecting, at that time, the fact, that, through the incaution of poor Goodwin's confessor, this lady, whom she had equally dreaded and despised as the greatest newsmonger in the neighbourhood, was in possession of a secret of General Carrington's, hitherto withheld from even his own child, and which he had thought to have carried safely to the grave. As soon, however, as she could escape from conversation, or rather "talk," which ever wearied her, Geraldine took leave, and feeling more depressed than she could well account for, was lifted on her horse in silence, and could only bow her acknowledgments to the group at the house door, for their eulogiums on her favourite Finella,

as she turned with her friend, Mr. Everard, into the winding and shady lane that led from the rectory of Lowbridge to the high lands of Elverton. The riders continued for some minutes in silence, till at length the old gentleman turning towards his abstracted companion, exclaimed, "Well, Miss Carrington, I have vowed to do your bidding, and, like a true knight, I shrink not. What parson shall I run a tilt with next?—What, in tears! Ah! you will never do for a Church reviver, with so faint a heart. What say you to calling at the vicarage, and engaging your pious relative to give us the 'wicked man turning away from his wickedness,' every day in the week? Well!"

Geraldine stopped her horse, as if with the intention of following this advice, and gazed with her companion on the distant view of the picturesque hamlet and parsonage-house of the valley. "No!" exclaimed she, at length moving onward, "it will be useless to urge my poor uncle Edmund to more labours; they have already injured his health. Were he to open his Church once, he must do it always, to which he could not pledge himself. You know this was the objection given us by Mr. Oakley in the town, on whom we first called."

"True!" cried Mr. Everard, and then uttering his usual challenge of "Well!" took out his tablets, and began to note down, "English Establish-

ment, in the parishes of Elverton and Lowbridge, declines to open her churches on the week days. First reason—afraid of doing what is right once, for fear of doing right always. Second—tired of the ‘the wicked man constantly turning away from his wickedness.’ Third—I have no third. What did that feaster, and no faster, Thornhill say? Did he give any reason why the spider only should lay up store during the week in Blowbridge Church?”

“No!” replied Geraldine, “but you hurried him—perhaps he may be prevailed upon to have one service during the week, and that will be something gained. I am sorry that you threw the whole blame of our visit on me, who merely wished to be your second; for the poor Rector has been so tormented by requests from ladies, respecting his religious opinions and duties, that he could not help complaining of them, and—” Geraldine stopped.

“Yes! yes! I heard the end,” said Mr. Everard; “the Rector said that he had only admitted Miss Carrington, because she was too young, too pretty, and too well bred, to give him any alarm respecting religious advice. Poor Thornhill! he little thought, when we cantered up his glebe land, what machinations were in store for him. ‘Et tu Brute!’”

“The bishop! the bishop!” suddenly exclaimed

Geraldine, "let us go to the bishop. He can command all these timid men to do their duty."

"Better ask *Mrs.* Bishop," said Mr. Everard drily.

"No, but seriously, Mr. Everard, what would be the result of an application to the bishop? You are very intimate at the palace."

"I am; and, therefore, can the better assure Miss Carrington that our Right Reverend Father in God would beg of her not to make herself ridiculous."

"Mr. Everard," said Geraldine warmly, "you are quite aware that I do not intend to put myself forward in the matter; and that I was your companion, not you mine, this morning. Tell me whether your friendship and influence with the bishop would not engage him to revive the ancient discipline of the Church?"

"No!" said Mr. Everard, "the bishop would propose nothing to his clergy, I am quite convinced; but, at the same time, I think he would co-operate, were they to come forward. He is a cautious, but a good, man; and, had he not a worldly wife, and fashionable daughters, would have been an ornament to the Church. I have my plans, and my hopes, and, in the meantime, you must be satisfied to keep the festivals appointed by your Church in your own house, forming what

congregation you can; only remember that the number must not exceed twenty-one."

"What am I to do after the departure of my uncle?" said Geraldine, after a long pause in the conversation. "I have often so much wished for a domestic chaplain, such as are only now to be found in the palaces of the bishops; and, when the office of tutor is joined to that of chaplain, in the families of our principal nobility. Surely, my father, who is so indulgent to me in every thing, would never refuse to myself and household this privilege."

"Humph!" said the old gentleman, "I think prudence would suggest your selecting some man advanced in life, or the chaplain might perhaps become too interesting to the almost solitary heiress of Elverton Hall."

"Not in the least," said Geraldine, "for on that point I am completely a Catholic. I wish most fervently that our clergy were without either wives or families, as they are in that Church. I have become quite out of heart with the wives of our clergy; for they seem to me more frivolous, more worldly, than many who have married men of the world. Perhaps I set too high a standard for these ladies. I wish them to be a set of 'Sisters of Charity,' and, by comparing them constantly with those devoted women, I become too exacting."

“And pray what do you know of ‘Sisters of Charity?’” said Mr. Everard.

“I know,” replied Geraldine, “of the indefatigable labours of that community, as all those do who have visited the public institutions in Paris and Dublin for the relief of the sick and destitute; and I know that, at this moment, while we are congratulating ourselves on the prevalence of this south-westerly wind, which blows from us to the infected town, four of these ‘Sisters’ are in the hospital in Elverton, under the guidance and protection of Mr. Bernard, braving not only the fearful ~~malady~~ itself, but every fatigue and hardship that can offer violence to the natural feelings. Why are our clergymen’s wives not like these?”

“Well! perhaps they would be as devoted,” returned he, “but for the little Johnnies and Tommies at home.”

“Exactly so,” cried Geraldine; “but the evil would scarcely be one, even if the wife not only begun but ended her charity at home, provided (and the Vicarage crossed her mind) that she did not hang like a mill-stone round her husband’s neck, and prevent his devoted usefulness to his flock. Mr. Everard, I do not know one good clergyman’s wife!”

“Then some day,” said he, “I will introduce you to one, in this very neighbourhood; but one so unobtrusive, so retiring, that she has escaped

your knowledge. She will prove a bright exception to confirm your rule." As Mr. Everard made this promise, they entered the last gate in the park, and the sound of the bell for the evening toilet, which faintly reached them, made them give their horses free rein till they reached the steps of the hall.

CHAPTER XI.

“Blessed is that simplicity which leaveth the difficult ways of disputes, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of God’s commandments.”

Thomas à Kempis.

“BLANDFORD,” whispered the Warden to his ‘own man,’ who stood at his usual post behind his master’s chair at the dinner table, “inquire what the joint is, and when it is to appear; I do not understand the plan of the dinner to-day.” A smile passed over the face of the butler, when summoned by the decorously grave valet to reply to the Provost’s inquiry; but the sense of his own official position in approaching a brother dignitary, repressed in the head of the sideboard all undue sense of the ridiculous, as he informed the astonished Doctor of Divinity, that Miss Carrington had expressly ordered that no joint or meat of any kind should be served up on the “*Hamper Days!*”

“Ah! what—really—oh! of course—very proper,” said the Warden, with admirable presence of mind. “Everard! a glass of wine?”

“Willingly, Warden. On the strength of the ‘Hamper Days?’ Well!”

“The ‘*Ember Days*,’” said Geraldine, much embarrassed by the sudden college look of her uncle, and the struggling mirth which played in the countenance of Mr. Everard and Miss Graham. “The *Ember Days* begin on this, the twenty-first of September, and used always to be kept as days of abstinence in the Church of England.”

“Why so? what was there either sinful or mournful about the *Ember Days*?” cried Katherine Graham, “was it then that St. Anthony preached to the fish, that we have nothing else at table?”

“Come! come,” said Dr. Sinclair, rousing himself, “there is plenty to eat, and a very good thing would it be, in a medical point of view, for the over-fed portion of society to keep what the Anglo-Indians term a ‘banyan day,’ once or twice a week. We all eat too much, according to Cornaro.”

“Oh!” rejoined Miss Graham, “I am sure that we can all do very well with less food, if necessary. I would often most willingly omit my dinner altogether, when I have taken no exercise. But it is the hope of propitiating God by fish and eggs, as holy food, that strikes me as so absurd. I would live on them entirely to do good to my fellow sinners; for instance, I would eat this insipid whiting every day, to ensure a good meat dinner

to some poor exhausted creature; but for the salvation of my own soul! and to be, at the same time, seen of men! Why, I can only quote—

‘The devil must grin;
For his favourite sin
Is pride that apes humility.’”

The servants all tittered, and the colour rose painfully to Geraldine's cheeks, though, by a great effort, she preserved silence, and endeavoured to forgive—not Katherine, for from her she had never expected support, but her uncle, who had given her false encouragement, by his theoretic adherence to what he shrunk from avowing practically. In his study, and amidst the fasting “Fathers of the English Church,” Dr. Sinclair fasted retrospectively, and was at peace. Great then was his embarrassment at being called upon to patronize the actual abstinence laid down so unmercifully in the Book of Common Prayer, and begun in all the simplicity of obedience by his niece; especially as he was aware of being too learned and noted a person in the Church not to have aroused enemies, who had already impeded his career of usefulness, by misrepresentations of the Popish twist of the learned Warden of ———.

“Geraldine,” said he at length, “you remember, in the twentieth article of the Church, that ‘she hath power to decree rites and ceremonies,’ and therefore it may happen, that in her wisdom

she may see fit to alter or abridge certain of them, for the greater edification of its members. Now, although 'fasting' is warranted by the highest example and precept in Scripture, namely, that of Christ, and also of the Apostles, and therefore may be justly reckoned an article of Christian obligation, rather than a rite or ceremony, yet the appointment of certain days for the observance of this duty is a matter of Church discipline, which may be, and has been, altered at various times, all which I will explain to you at some future period. In the interim," added he, "I believe you need not make us keep any more of the 'Ember Days,' although I greatly applaud your zeal for desiring to act strictly according to the supposed commands of your Church."

Geraldine, pleased that her uncle had spoken on the subject, and had even praised her, readily gave up the Ember fast, in the full expectation that the alteration of the appointed days would be soon pointed out to her; and she now listened with recovered spirits to the learned conversation which took place throughout the rest of the repast, between the Warden and Mr. Everard, on Jewish, Mahommedan, and Pagan fasts. Thence they went off to the Brahmins, till the departure of the servants, who, having at length placed the dessert on the table, finally left the room, completely mystified on the subject of fasting, and with but one

clear persuasion, namely, that of the vast learning and power over ‘dictionary words,’ possessed by the reverend Warden and his friend. When freed from these attendants, Dr. Sinclair again addressed his niece, and prefacing what he had to say, by his conviction that he spoke before confidential friends, bade Geraldine recal to mind the outcry raised in his University, and the strong party formed against him, even in his own College, at the time of Catholic Emancipation, on the absurd notion that he secretly favoured Popery.—“What another man might fearlessly do, I dare not,” added he, “at any rate, till other men are wise, or I beyond their reach. Placed, as I am, in a high official position, surrounded by spies and enemies, and already suspected by government, I can venture nothing that would confirm these suspicions: and I would scorn to do that in private which I could not do publicly. Therefore, Geraldine, until I can boldly keep the fasts and abstinence days in the commemoration room of ——— College, I cannot in propriety keep them here. Besides, in these changes in the household, you would do well to await the General’s return. I am but a guest, and as the whole responsibility of any matter of this kind would rest on me, instead of on you, I feel averse to what would doubtless appear impertinent and intrusive to the master of the house, on his return.”

Geraldine was silent; she scarcely knew what she thought, and therefore could not reply. She was quite aware of the persecution against her uncle, at the time of the emancipation of the long restricted Catholics. She was also aware that Dr. Sinclair's early friends, who were now in power, had listened to his enemies, and withheld from him the long-expected bishopric. But for this storm, he would doubtless have given her his aid; as it was, he plainly refused it, and she must submit. She would wait till he had left her, as soon he must, to return to his college duties: and now making the signal to her friend, Miss Graham, she arose, and the ladies retired together. "Keep up your spirits, my dear Geraldine," said Katharine, laughing, as they mounted the stairs arm in arm. "Wait for the General's return; for, mad as he becomes when Popery stalks abroad, yet I am sure he will consent to your eating what food you like, if you are but discreet enough to give some wiser motive than your soul's salvation. You know how seldom he touches meat himself, so fond is he of the river fish: why, then, cannot you have a sudden taste for these muddy creatures, and continue to avoid the criminal food of land animals? Oh! Geraldine," suddenly cried she more gravely, "how can you degrade the Christian's glorious liberty by such weak scruples? Does not Christ expressly say that it is not what goeth into the

mouth that defileth? and this keeping of particular days, is it not plainly rebuked by the Apostle?"

"As for the particular days rebuked by St. Paul," replied Geraldine, "they were Jewish commemorations, not Christian; and I see plainly the advantage and comfort of established days, that all things may be done decently and in order, 'no undue fasting with some, and convenient forgetfulness with others, and that the communion of feeling and of duty may be kept up between the members of a Church, by all uniting, at the same time, in the same penitential following of Christ;' for you cannot deny, Katherine, that He did give us the example of fasting."

"I think that 'He bore *all* our griefs, and carried *all* our sorrows,'" replied Katherine, with her usual promptitude of quotation.

"And are we then to do nothing for Him?" said Geraldine, the tears starting to her eyes as she remembered the rest of that touching prophecy from Isaiah.

"Yes! you can do all those works of mercy which He says that He will receive as if done unto himself," replied Katherine, "but do not fetter the Christian Dispensation, by retaining the bondage of the Jewish Law."

"Not except where He commands it, certainly," said Geraldine: "but I think He does command us to fast;"—and, as she said this, Geraldine, in-

stead of following her friend into her boudoir, which continued to be the favourite evening resort of the little party at the Hall, passed on to a light reading closet, which she had lately thought of fitting up as an oratory, and, opening her Bible at the Gospel of St. Matthew, determined to search regularly throughout the New Testament, and to note down every thing relating to fasting that should occur in its sacred pages. "I am tired of mere theory," she mentally exclaimed, "and of those admissions made in learned seclusion, which are not to be acted upon because of such and such doctrine of expediency. I am accused of rushing into every thing I have once admitted to be right: but is this blamable? Surely not! I cannot help acting on my convictions, for by these shall I be judged at the last day!" She then turned to the shelves, containing her books of devotion, and having only the day before arranged and classed them, was then, for the first time, aware of the number of *commentaries* on Scripture, and *aids* to Bible reading, which she had gradually collected during the past four years, to assist her judgment in reading the Holy Scriptures; and as she continued to gaze on these prettily bound little keepsakes from her Evangelical friends, she was struck with the inconsistency of their having so eagerly sent them to her at various times, when their boasted privilege had ever been the exercise of each one's private

judgment, *without aid or comment*, on “the Bible, the whole Bible, and *nothing but* the Bible.” “How few there are,” thought she, “who really know what they believe? Sir Eustace de Grey gives a not inappropriate title to Protestants, when he calls them ‘the Children of the Mist:’ and alas! alas! how sad is it that the Church, which commands my respect from the decision and immutability with which her members believe, and act on their belief, yet teaches so much more than is warranted by the word of God.” But suddenly checking herself: “What have I to do with either Evangelical or Roman Catholic community? I am a member of the real old Church of England—a Church most beautiful and pure, and in whose bosom I have promised to remain, in common gratitude and respect, until at least I shall have fulfilled all her commands, in spite of the cowardice of her long pampered children. And therefore, I now search for Scriptural warrant for fasting, more for Katherine than for myself: for if I acknowledge the authority of a Church to teach the Christian verities to the ignorant, and believe that the Holy Ghost directs her decisions, I must, in common sense, admit her interpretation of holy writ; and my uncle has to-day again repeated that ‘fasting is an article of Christian *obligation* in the Church of England.’” Having thus finished her little soliloquy, Geraldine took down “Chal-

mers' Scripture Reference,' to serve as a concordance for quickly discovering all the texts which bore upon fasting; but in vain did she look in that otherwise useful little book for a word not admitted into the creed of the author; so she ended where she should have begun, with her little "Brown's Concordance," and speedily collected the following texts, for the purpose of convincing, or at least of silencing the objections of, Katherine Graham:—

First, noting the warning against hypocritical fasting, given by our Lord in *St. Matt.* vi. 16, which seems to be the only part of the injunction remembered by Protestants, Geraldine wrote down, "but *when thou fastest*, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou seem not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which seeth in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself *shall reward thee openly.*" "Can anything be plainer than this command, and this promise?" thought she, and then copied from the same gospel, (chap. ix.) the reason given by Christ why his disciples did not fast, which was, because their light and their joy was still with them. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and *then shall they fast.*"

The cure of the lunatic, which could not be effected but through prayer and *fasting*, next followed, from *Matt.* xvii. 21, and then from *Acts* i. when the prophets and teachers at Antioch

“ministered to the Lord, and *fasted*, the Holy Ghost thus commanded: ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’ Then *fasted* they and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and let them go.” Also at the ordination of the elders, “when they (Paul and Barnabas) had prayed and *fasted*, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed.”

Geraldine then remarked and noted down the “fasting often” of the great Apostle, and thought that Katherine must admit that he, at least, came within our power of imitation, though Christ, being God, was beyond it; and that, if Paul, a vessel of election, saw that he ought to suffer with Christ after his example, so ought we; for, although we may again escape from the responsibility of our blessed Saviour’s example, by considering Him to have suffered every thing for us, yet this cannot hold good with St. Paul and the other Apostles. “I shall not await my father’s return,” cried Geraldine mentally, to obey the plain words of Scripture, and the commands of my Church; but I will so far obey my uncle also, as not to compel others to this duty at present.” And, comforted with having come to some determination on this subject, she folded up her little paper of texts, to slip into Miss Graham’s workbox, and returned with a cheerful countenance to the boudoir, where she found the Warden and Miss Graham engaged

at backgammon, and Mr. Everard leaning back on the sofa in a fit of abstraction, his yet untasted coffee in his hand. He was roused, however, by Geraldine's approach; and, making room for her by him, "Allow me," whispered he, "to congratulate you on the very successful attempts you have hitherto made to revive the zeal and fervour of your Church!"

"Ah, Mr. Everard," replied she, endeavouring to respond to the raillery of his tone, "you are but a poor comforter, if not a malicious sprite, leading me through bog and briar, but to laugh at me!"

"Not a bit," returned he; "I laughed to comfort myself. I have often been driven to that soothing self-deception through life; but," added he more gravely, "I do not see any cause for melancholy, only we must have patience, and wait the course of events; and the gradual re-action of the public mind, from the delusion of supposed private judgment, and dread of authority, to a general demand for the certainty and repose of Church decisions."

That night, as Geraldine was seated at her toilet, and preparing, as usual, to read aloud some book of devotional instruction to her attendant, she was arrested by so unmerciful a pull of her entangled tresses, that, uttering a scream, she started up, and, turning, beheld Mrs. Kelsoe, with

her eyes blinded by tears, standing in that rigid uprightness of position, which her young mistress well knew foreboded a storm. Gently disengaging herself, Geraldine inquired, with her usual kind manner, into the cause of such apparent distress : but fresh tears being the only reply she could obtain, she turned once more to her book : when, provoked to utterance, Mrs. Kelsoe exclaimed, “ And is it come to this ! ah ! the poor dear General.”

“ Good heavens,” cried Geraldine ; “ then you know something of my father !—something calamitous. Ah ! Kelsoe, speak quickly, I entreat—I command you—conceal nothing from me ; I can always bear the truth.”

“ God grant you may, Miss Carrington ; but many say this, who can but ill bear the truth when it does come. However, to come to the point, for any thing I know to the contrary, the honoured General is in the best possible health.”

“ Oh ! blessed be God !” cried Geraldine, taking a deep breath, “ proceed then, Kelsoe, with what you have to say !”

“ I have to say this, ma’am, that I have known the General, off and on, these thirty years, and I know his sentiments pretty well, and whom he likes and dislikes, and what he likes and dislikes, and the families in the county he keeps off from,

and the religion he keeps off from. And I know that the De Grey family is one, and that Popery is one; and here's the truth, Miss Carrington; and if you are drawn into these two things, it's all over with the General—the best of men, the kindest, the calmest—but if once properly worked up!—oh my powers! the great Dragon of Wantley would be nothing to him.”

Here Geraldine leaned her head on her toilet, and, by its tremulous movement, seemed to weep; but great was Mrs. Kelsoe's mortification and wrath when it proved to be continued and irrepressible laughter.

“ Ah ! very well, ma'am, I am glad you can be so merry about it; and, indeed, you had better laugh while you can, for it will not last long.”

“ Very probably not, Kelsoe,” at length replied her mistress, gradually recovering from the comparison which had so much amused her. “ I doubt not but that you are a true prophetess of ills to come. But what has excited all these fears of Popery and of a family I scarcely ever see ?”

“ Ah ma'am ! why, the very lowest of the servants is aware of your now meaning to keep the Popish feasts and fasts, and to make us all keep them, if we wish to be in favour; and they have it, Miss Carrington, that all this change is to be dated from the morning that Squire Everard con-

trived a meeting between you and Sir Eustace de Grey, up at the abbey ruins, where the grooms say they had to wait more than two hours."

"And is it possible," said Geraldine proudly, "that grooms and scullions *dare* to intrude their ignorant curiosity on subjects far above them, and that you, Kelsoe, can so forget yourself as to repeat all this to me? With respect to what you and the rest of the household call 'Popish fasts,' I follow the example and commands, first, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, next, of the Apostles and early Christians, and lastly, of the orthodox Church of England. Those who in future venture to disobey such authority as this, must do so on their own responsibility. I force no one, but still must warn the servants that they had better reflect, not on their mistress's motives, but on the state of their own souls, and on the account they will have to give of listening to their own pampered inclinations, instead of the self-denial and mortification practised by the early Church. As for yourself, Kelsoe, I value and love you too much, not to treat you as a friend; and therefore, will set your mind at ease, respecting any member of the De Grey family, whom mere accident may cause me to meet; but any suppositions relating to my highly esteemed friend, Mr. Everard, I should regard as impertinences, undeserving a

reply, and I request that I may never hear them again."

"Indeed, Miss Carrington, I beg pardon. I believe whatever you tell me, for you have from a child spoken the truth. I shall immediately put a stop to all the talk below."

"Stay, Kelsoe. I wish you certainly to silence these idle babblings; but, when you do so, remember *to* whom you speak, and *of* whom you speak," said the naturally haughty heiress: "and now good night, and leave me; I want nothing more."

"Well, but ma'am," said Mrs. Kelsoe, still lingering, "you know, if you please, that we are in duty bound to consult the minister of this parish of Elverton Manor, our own Mr. Edmund, about fasting, or—what is the other name for it?"

"Abstinence," replied Geraldine; "but they do not, I believe, mean the same thing. Abstinence is, I think, the renouncement of the more nourishing and luxurious food for harder fare, without restriction of quantity; while, on the fasting days, one meal only of that harder fare is eaten."

"No bad thing occasionally, ma'am, for the butler and coachman," simpered Mrs. Kelsoe; "but, if you please, we'll consult Mr. Edmund, because, as the Warden's own gentleman, Mr.

Blandford, says, there are prodigious remains of Popery in the Prayer Book, which he supposes it was all very right not to meddle with in former days, when it would not have been politic to hurry the public mind; but la! Miss Carrington, it's amazing the opening of people's minds, in these days. They will read and judge for themselves, and I doubt (as Mr. Blandford says) if they will consent to 'walk backwards.'"

"If they have wandered from the right path, they must retrace their steps," replied Geraldine; and they will find the reward of their humility and docility in the peace of mind they will enjoy. But you are very right, Kelsoe, in wishing to refer to our duly appointed pastor, and it shall be done as soon as possible."

Mrs. Kelsoe now withdrew for the night; and Geraldine, immediately seeking her writing materials, wrote the following note to the Reverend Edmund Sinclair:—

"My dear Uncle,

"The interdict still continuing on any communication between our dwellings, I am compelled to write, instead of conversing with you, on a subject which at present disturbs my mind, namely, the duty of 'fasting,' as commanded by our Church, on the authority of Christ's precepts and example, and of the practice of the Apostles

and primitive Christians. Myself and household apply to you, in preference to the Warden, first, because you are our appointed minister, and next, because he has been so much misunderstood and misrepresented, on the subject of 'Popery,' that he would rather not at present be the one to establish, in this house, a custom, held by Catholics alone as an essential duty. And why is this? Why do they alone simply and unhesitatingly follow Scripture in this respect? Are we not allowing them an undue advantage over our purer faith?

Most truly your affectionate niece,

GERALDINE CARRINGTON."

On the evening of the following day our heroine received Mr. Sinclair's reply:—

" Dear Geraldine,

" Beware of suffering the calm faith of your regenerated state to be disturbed by suggestions that can come only from the evil one. What are our poor, defiled, and wholly corrupt works, but filthy rags in the sight of an all pure God? Why trust to them, instead of to that perfect victim, ever ready to answer for us, having fulfilled all righteousness in that one sacrifice of himself once offered? It is true that he fasted—a fast of great mystery—and do you too fast, but let it be a

fast of the spirit, a fast from sin, a fast such as is described in *Isaiah* lviii. 6, 7, 8. Many things are to be found in the Book of Common Prayer, which were excusable at a period when the minds of men, just issuing from the darkness of Popery, dazzled by the radiant light of faith alone, and too weak to bear this pure doctrine, were still crying out, ‘what good shall I do!’ But, dear friend, *we* have not so learned Christ, that, after we have ‘begun in the spirit, we would now be made perfect in the flesh.’ Let me conclude by exhorting you, as Paul did the Galatians, to ‘stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.’”

Geraldine slowly and sadly folded up this note, musing on the infatuation, which had led the most pious and devoted followers of the *new* Church of England to find difficulties in the simple commands and example of Christ, and to seek for their explanation in abstruse passages of St. Paul. She was at first tempted to conceal the contents of the paper from Mrs. Kelsoe; but her love of truth prevailed; and on the abigail’s eager inquiries, when she attended her lady’s toilet, Geraldine replied, “That Mr. Sinclair did not see the necessity of mortifying the body, though he had written

beautifully on the spiritual discipline, requisite for those who aspired to conformity with Christ."

"Exactly my opinions, ma'am," exclaimed the delighted Mrs. Kelsoe, who loved to expatiate, over a hot meat supper every night, on the utter nothingness of man's works; "that is what I always say, 'By faith alone shall ye be saved, and not by works, lest any man should boast.'"

"People must also take care," replied Geraldine, "not to boast of their sins of omission."

"La, ma'am! why, surely you would not differ from St. Paul?"

"No! Kelsoe, far from it; I agree, and glory in agreeing, with the great Apostle; and, instead of taking from his writings isolated texts, I endeavour to study the whole—I compare one part with another, and I am thus enabled to observe, that the seeming contradiction occasionally exhibited of his sentiments, is to be explained by the different abuses against which he had to combat. Hence, while the one text you have just quoted is all you think necessary to remember, I retain his having also spoken of his 'fastings often,' and of his keeping his body under, and bringing it into subjection.'"

"Well, Miss Carrington, I have the greatest admiration for your goodness and learning; indeed, ma'am, I have. No one can know and love your

piety more than I do : but still you see, ma'am, if you and our minister differ in opinion, what is to be done ? You yourself always say that we must 'humbly and simply follow the direction of our duly appointed minister,'—these are your very words."

"Very true," at length replied Geraldine, in a sad and abstracted manner ; and then, after another pause, she added, "I think, Kelsoe, that I shall endeavour to have some further conversation with both my uncles on this subject, and, in the meantime, until we receive their positive commands, we shall do well each to act according to the dictates of her conscience. You, therefore, will make no distinction, of course, between Friday and the other days of the week ; but, as I perceive that my Church has set apart the day on which Christ died, for the penitential commemoration of his sufferings, I shall henceforth abstain from animal food, and great delicacies, and, if possible, will sing only sacred music on that sad but holy day."

CHAPTER XII.

Fierce to her foes, yet fears her force to try,
Because she wants innate authority ;
For how can she constrain them to obey,
Who has herself cast off the lawful sway.

Dryden.

ON the following evening, Miss Graham, after amusing herself for some time at the piano, closed the instrument, and approached the oriel window, in which the little party generally sat, curious to know why old Mr. Everard had been so unmoved by his usual favourite airs of ‘Awa’ Whigs awa’, and ‘Lochaber no more.’ “What can be engaging you so deeply?” cried she, “that you require neither chess nor music this evening, and that you have never once moved nor spoken, since you brought up from the library that wise looking old book, which, from its appearance, deserves to have been written by a Covenanter?”

“Your random shot is not amiss,” returned he; “for, although not written by a Covenanter, this book treats of that body of mistaken men; and I have just fallen on a part, which, if I interrupt no one, I wish to read aloud, as it bears strongly upon

the subject lately discussed by high and low Church. Here, Geraldine, is a specimen of what you call the *real* Church of England, in the death-bed repentance of Speaker Lenthal, after the murder of the king, Charles I, as related by a dignitary of that Church.

“‘When I came into his (Speaker Lenthal’s) presence, he told me he was very glad to see me, for he had two great works to do, and I must assist him in both, to fit his body for the earth, and his soul for heaven ! to which purpose he desired me to pray with him. I told him the Church had appointed an office at the visitation of the sick, and I must use that. He said, ‘ Yes, he chiefly desired the prayers of the Church,’ wherein he joined with great fervency and devotion. After prayers, he desired absolution : I told him I was very ready and willing to pronounce it, but he must first come to a Christian confession, and contrition for the sins and failings of his life. ‘ Well, sir,’ said he, ‘ then instruct me to my duty.’ I desired him to examine his life, by the Ten Commandments, and wherein he found his failings, to fly to the gospel for mercy. * * * After the confession, he said he died a dutiful son of the Church of England, as it was established before these times ; for he had not yet seen the alteration of the Liturgy. After this office, wherein he showed himself a very hearty penitent, he again desired the absolution of

the Church, which I then pronounced, and which he received with much content and satisfaction; ‘For,’ says he, ‘now indeed do I find the joy and benefit of that office, which Christ hath left in his Church.’ Then, praying for the king, that he might long and happily live over us, and for the peace of the Church, he again desired prayers. The next day he received the Sacrament, and, after that work, I desired him to express himself to Dr. Dickenson, concerning the King’s death, because he had only done it to me in confession; which he did, to the same effect as he had done to me. The rest of his time was spent in devotion and penitential meditations to the last.’

“Here you will observe, Geraldine,” added Mr. Everard, as he closed the old book, “the sense entertained by the minister, of the sacredness of disclosures made in sacramental confession; so that not one word of the interesting and important account of the king’s death could he venture to repeat, unless the penitent himself gave it over again beyond confession. Observe also the faith of the dying man in the spiritual power given by Christ to his Church. Now, this is, or rather was, the true Church of England—alas, how fallen!”

“Well, Miss Graham, what say you to this account.”

“Why this,” replied Katherine:—“you all know

my opinion respecting the often discussed subject of confession and absolution, between two fellow sinners ; therefore I need say no more on the subject. But what principally strikes me in this account is, that Speaker Lenthal dies a dutiful son of a Church differing from what it was when the book was written ; for the narrator says,—‘ He had not seen the alteration of the Liturgy.’ Now a simple Bible Christian would not be staggered at this vacillation in the counsel and work of man ; but you, who believe, or try to believe, in a divinely appointed set of rules, how do you get over this ?”

“ The alteration spoken of was, probably, only that of giving more clearness and precision to the Church service ; a more perfect form of sound words,” said Mr. Everard.

“ No ! no ! my good sir,” returned Katherine ; “ even *I* know better than that ; so you need not talk of ‘ probably,’ for those vague words suit neither your accurate learning, nor my positive temper. I am quite aware that the alterations in the English Liturgy were those of faith ;—for instance, in that most important point, of the Real Presence in the Sacrament, you know very well, that the first Communion service of the Church of England, as drawn up in 1552, by Cranmer, Ridley, and other of your bishops, whom the Warden calls the ‘ venerated Fathers of the Eng-

lish Church,' clearly expresses, that 'the whole body of Christ is received under each particle of the Sacrament.' Afterwards, when Calvinistic truth partly prevailed, and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, drawn up by the same prelates, were published in 1552, the Real Presence is there expressly *denied*, and the impossibility of that belief explained by the circumstance of Christ's Ascension in His glorified body to heaven. The Liturgy was then changed, that Liturgy which the Warden tells Geraldine she may safely trust to, as being a perfect commentary on Scripture, and a true exposition of the faith once delivered to the saints ! Ten years after this, Queen Elizabeth being on the throne, and inheriting an inclination for the former belief, the passage in the book of Common Prayer, which declares against the real and corporeal presence in the Sacrament, was expunged, and the words left in their original popish state. During the next hundred years so they remained, until, at the Restoration, which seems to be the time of your narrative, Mr. Everard, amongst many alterations which then took place, the Rubric against the Real Presence and adoration of the Sacrament, was again restored as it stands at present."

"Well, Miss Graham, I can say nothing to contradict you in this account: I can only give you

due credit for your accuracy, and wonder how you came by all this knowledge?"

"Why, Mr. Everard, the fact is, that, although I was brought up in a sort of confused manner, with respect to religion, and supposed that, because I could say the English catechism by heart, and never went to any place of worship but the Episcopal Church, I was therefore a true Church of England woman; yet, at eighteen, I went to Scotland, just six years ago, and found, amongst my Scotch relations, knowledge as well as piety; and from them I learned what I have just repeated to you. My cousin, Kenneth Fergusson, and his sister Margaret, both enthusiasts for their purer faith, led me to the 'martyrs' graves,' to them a hallowed spot, to me one of humiliation; for there had English bayonets slaughtered Scotch reformers, because, when they cast off the yoke of Rome, they did the work effectually, (retaining none of those things which their own divines considered anti-scriptural) and without consulting England. Margaret had paid a visit to London; and to listen to her simple, yet sarcastic, account of the complicated and grand ceremonials she had witnessed, you would have supposed her to be describing Popish Rome, instead of Protestant London. 'Why did English ministers wear a white dress in the reading desk, and a black one in the pulpit? and walk

in and out of a little room, in that mysterious manner, just to change their dress? Why did they stand so little raised above the people, when reading God's words, and be mounted up so high to read their own words? Why did the English Church people kneel round an altar to the bread and wine, if they did not worship them? Why did they never seem to know what they did, or did not believe,' &c. But Kenneth was the most resolute and constant champion of the Kirk, and critic of the English Church service, of which he had an historical knowledge far beyond my own. Kenneth could give the date, and relate the circumstances attending every part, retained from, or substituted for, the Roman Catholic Mass, Vespers, and Litanies. All Henry's, young Edward's, and Elizabeth's changes of faith for the good people of England, excited his sarcastic vein of humour, and roused my spirit of enquiry. He had no patience with the remnants of popery in the Church of England; and by his pointing out to me the hollowness, the falsehood, of retaining certain doctrines in the letter, which were denied in the spirit—and this for the purpose of conciliating the people—he drew the key-stone from the arch, which I had taken for granted was unassailable, and to stand for ever."

"The sister lands have each a humour of their own, and proved it in nothing more than in their

mode of protesting against the Roman Hierarchy," observed Mr. Everard.

"But it has always struck me," said Geraldine, "as out of keeping with the usually calm and cautious Scotch, to dash everything to the ground at once. I should have expected this impetuosity more from the English mob."

"And from the 'mob' in England you would have found it," replied Mr. Everard, "had *they* originated the Reformation. But here was the difference between the two countries. In England, the people received their faith from their rulers and pastors, and the change was comparatively temperate and gradual——"

"And attempered by a pleasing variety," interrupted Katherine, laughing, "as these rulers and pastors, under succeeding sovereigns, changed their faith four times. Few of them, comparatively speaking, choosing to leave their benefices, instead of their opinions. Worthy brethren of the 'Vicar of Bray!'"

"Miss Graham," said the Warden, at length roused to lay down his book, "these light assertions are not borne out by historical evidence. The Church of England has had, it is true, to mourn over faithless sons; but, when more instructed on the subject, you will find that, even in the trying circumstance of hereditary popish succession, her confessors and martyrs were *not* few!"

“ I am sufficiently instructed,” replied Katherine, “ to know that, even during the reign of odious Mary, the number of the persecuted, including clergy and people of the Church of England, did not exceed seven hundred, while of the nonconformists to that Church, two thousand clergymen in one day preferred ruin and exile to the adoption of all the ceremonies forced anew on them : and of the laity who suffered then and since for nonconformity to the Liturgy of England, no calculation could be made : those who chose exile, left the half popish, half Protestant, and wholly savage, tyranny of the English Star Chamber, for the freedom of America, and carried their pure faith to a new world.

‘ Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod,
They have left unstained what there they found,—
Freedom to worship God ! ’ ”

“ Very pretty lines, and very well repeated,” said Mr. Everard ; “ but an account of the modern Churches in America would damp your enthusiasm respecting ‘ unstained freedom,’ and the present ‘ holiness of the soil ! ’ ”

“ Well, my dear,” said the old gentleman, turning to Geraldine, who, during the latter part of this discussion, had laid aside her book, “ how far have you proceeded, and what are your im-

pressions on reading Joseph Milner a second time ?”

“ I have read to the end of the third century,” replied Geraldine, and I am confirmed in the impression which I had received from my uncle, that this work, pious and interesting though it be, is very imperfect as a history, inasmuch as it contains so many more sentiments than facts. Here is a passage which nearly induced me to lay down the book, as one quite unsuited to me, in my search after records of the past :—‘ What I cannot believe, I shall not take the trouble to transcribe ; what I can, where the matter appears worthy of memory, shall be exhibited.’ Here, then, you see, is not given to me the whole harvest field in which to glean ; but Milner has already gleaned for me ; nor is this all. I am again displeased with him for his strange inconsistency, when dwelling on ‘ Regeneration,’ or the ‘ new birth’ in baptism, the belief in which he calls ‘ poison itself’ ! and then wishes (page 431) that ‘ Christian people had never been vexed with a controversy so frivolous as this about baptism ;’ as if a controversy could be *frivolous*, which related to *poisonous* doctrines ! Then again, in another part, he declares that he fully believes, that this regenerating work of the Spirit *did* accompany the Sacrament of Baptism in the early ages. After all this confusion and

contradiction, I cannot but think very moderately of Joseph Milner, either as a theologian or historian." Geraldine here turned again to the book in question, and read for some time in silence, till at length she exclaimed—"Oh ! uncle ! oh ! Mr. Everard, listen to this,—Milner actually asserts that the 'apostles themselves, had it not been for St. Paul, would have declined from the right faith,' and this after the descent of the Holy Ghost ! Does Milner then pretend to be wiser than the Holy Spirit ! What blasphemy !—and how am I to trust to the accounts he will soon give me of the apostacy of the Church, when he can venture thus far to broach impossibilities. I shall read no more :"—and closing her book, she pushed it from her with indignation, not to be mollified by Mr. Everard's smiling excuses for one necessarily warped by party prejudice, and bewildered by having sworn fealty to a Church, which was not sufficiently Calvinistic for his principles.

"Then," replied she, "'warped' and 'bewildered' men should not venture to write history !"

"If you succeed in finding a perfectly unbiassed and dispassionate historian," said Mr. Everard, "you will indeed possess a prize. The only way to act, in the mean time, is to persevere in your determination to lay up a store of facts, from historians of opposite parties in politics or creed, and

then to form your own conclusions. Go on with Milner's account, and then try Mosheim; and you will do well to take notes of each, and compare the two records, on the point you have most at heart, namely, the affinity of the Church of England with that of the early Church Catholic, or Universal."

CHAPTER XIII.

——— She cries aloud for aid
To Church and councils, whom she first betrayed.

Dryden.

DURING the next few weeks, Geraldine was accordingly busied in the perusal of the Church histories, recommended to her: and, dissatisfied as she had been with the first volume of Milner, she nevertheless went steadily through the whole work, particularly noting the belief and practice of the Christians, during the ages acknowledged to be pure by the Church of England, of which the Rev. Joseph Milner was an ordained minister. “ Well might Mr. Everard warn me not to expect to find just the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles, and nothing more, in the early centuries,” cried she, as she closed the last volume of the work, and turned to the notes, which she had previously made, of the instructions of the learned Warden, her retentive memory having enabled her to recal and fix his very words . . . “ The Church of England refers her sons to a standard of interpretation, collected from the authority of ages.

The appeal is made to a pure and holy time in the Universal Christian Church, against this brawling self-sufficient age:" and then followed, in reply to some enquiry,—“ She (the Church of England) receives all the primitive creeds, and the first four General Councils, and submits to the common assent of the Fathers, during the first five centuries of the Catholic Church.”

Again, on farther search through her notes, Geraldine found,—“ I have most assuredly told you, that our holy and apostolic Church of England does claim those first five centuries, which the Romanists also claim. Give them up the early ages of the Church, and they may indeed charge us with heresy; for departure from the Church is most guilty in the sight of God, who has declared, that those who hear her not, are as heathens.”

“ If I were to rely on Milner,” thought she, “ I must be compelled to give up the first ages to the Romanists: for he groans over the corruptions and superstitions of those times too much, to have a claim on them.—Come forth then, at length, Mosheim; for I hear thou art an accurate and honest chronicler!” and Geraldine, too anxious and excited to feel fatigue, commenced anew the investigation of the rites and ceremonies, as well as of the faith and practice, of the Christian Church, during the first five centuries. She im-

parted to no one the result of her fresh labours, till, one morning, entering the library at an hour, when, as she expected, she found Mr. Everard alone, she laid her hand on his book, to gain his attention, and entreated him to hear what she had to say. The old gentleman looked up smiling, but started when he observed the swollen eyes and pale cheeks of his favourite, and enquired anxiously what had befallen her ?

Geraldine, without replying to his question, said, with forced composure, “ Mr. Everard, I know you to be noted for your historical accuracy. I know also that, although accused of being a dreaming speculatist on impossibilities, you are withheld by no party feeling from seeing clearly the truth. I come, therefore, to tell you, and you alone, the result of my researches into Protestant Church History. I find, during the first five centuries :

“ First ; That the apostolical command, to anoint the dying with oil, and to pray over them, was constantly observed.

“ Secondly ; That an intermediate state of purification for the soul, after death, was an article of faith.

“ Thirdly ; That the sign of the cross was universal in the Church.

“ Fourthly ; That the consecrated elements were held up to the view of the people.

“Fifthly; That miracles attended the preaching of Christianity: and

“Sixthly; That the prayers of the martyrs were invoked, and that supplication was made for the faithful departed. I find, also, that the first four councils, which are received by our Church, *confirmed all these things, as articles of faith, against heretics*; and, in short, Mr. Everard, the perusal of these Protestant histories of the Church has again unsettled my mind, and I am once more as miserable as when the Warden arrived, and gave me temporary comfort, by holding out to me the Church of England, as the firm and gentle mother, in whose bosom I was to rest in peace.”

As Mr. Everard only uttered his usual exclamation of “Well!” Geraldine continued:—“To begin with the Sacrament of the Dying, let me again ask you, dear sir, what reason our Church can possibly have for rejecting it? Surely, from the definition given in the catechism, of an ‘outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace, ordained by Christ himself’——”

“Stop there,” cried Mr. Everard, “the Warden would tell you, that ‘Christ himself’ did not institute this anointing of the dying, and that it is, therefore, rejected as a Sacrament by the Church of England.”

“What an unworthy quibble!” returned GERAL-

dine; “for, when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for men, did he not send the Holy Ghost, to ‘lead them into all truth?’ and did not the Holy Ghost inspire the sacred writers? St. James, too, who (with Peter and John) was the constant and favoured friend of our Lord, might well be trusted to have known his blessed will, even without inspiration; but, when guided by the Holy Spirit!—Oh! Mr. Everard, what are all these modern writers, and framers of articles, compared to an inspired apostle! How can they *dare* to disobey the plain words of Scripture, and why does the Church of England admit this epistle at all, if she is merely to follow the part of it which suits her, and to reject the rest?”

“Well! Luther so far agreed with you, that he was for rejecting the epistle altogether, as ‘an epistle of straw,’” said Mr. Everard.

“Yes! and what impious presumption!” cried Geraldine. “But your mention of Luther reminds me to tell you, that I have, during this last silent month, read also the lives of most of the first Reformers, namely those of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, together with the history of the rise of the different Protestant communities after the separation from Rome; and the conclusion is, that the modern evangelical world is the only thing, to which I can liken the dogmatism, coupled with unceasing vacillation, the violence,

the recrimination, and total want of brotherly love, to be found amongst the revolutionists of the sixteenth century."

"Bravo!" cried Mr. Everard; so you have at length adopted my word for the Reformation?"

"I have," replied Geraldine, "for I find my uncle's account to have been perfectly correct, when he told me, that 'the continental Reformers were not content with pruning and paring from the ancient Church, but that they uprooted, devastated, demolished; and that the result of their impetuous and extravagant career, was this, that there was scarcely one prominent corruption of the Romish times, which could not be contrasted by its opposite error amongst the English dissenters, and Scotch and continental Reformers.' . . . Therefore, my search into their history has only served to drive me back to the Church of England, as the only Protestant community which can lay claim to the controlling influence of a duly appointed priesthood, uninterrupted from the first ordination by Christ our head."

"Well! and now you are falling out with this Church, because she has curtailed the number of the Sacraments, abolished prayers for the dead, and forbidden the invocation of the saints, the adoration of the Eucharist, and belief in miracles. Is that it?—Why, Geraldine, you do not believe in these things yourself!"

“No,” replied she, “I certainly do not. But what has that to do with it?” Mr. Everard started—“I mean,” continued she, “that the truth or falsehood of this belief must be tried by some surer touchstone than *my* reception or rejection of it; for certainly *I* do not pretend to infallibility. You were present, Mr. Everard, I remember, when my uncle having proved the necessity of a visible Church, of which the ministers should possess authority from Christ their head, to teach the ignorant, and duly administer the Sacraments, I was anxious to be assured, past all farther doubt, that my Church did not possess that unerring authority, and that when she separated from the corruptions of Rome, she had retained that which I felt to be true faith and not presumption, namely, the guidance of the Holy Ghost—in one word “Infallibility.” I was surprised that the Warden should even attempt to make a distinction between these, for they cannot be disunited; but, if you recollect, he ended his defence of the convocation, held in London in 1571, by saying, that if the Church of England hesitate in claiming the high title of “infallible,” she is nevertheless the guardian and defender of that which was, and is, infallible, namely the faith once delivered to the Saints, and that she was therefore worthy of implicit trust.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Everard, “I remember all that.”

“I then asked,” continued Geraldine, “whether I might set my mind at rest by this conviction, that, ‘as the Church of England is, in essentials, exactly the same with the early Catholic Church of the five first centuries, inasmuch as that Church was infallible, because still pure from its apostolic founders, so also is the Church of England; but she cannot enforce any thing that is not proved to have been held by that early Church, and of course (now listen, Mr. Everard) must not *deny* any thing clearly flowing from that apostolic source.’ My uncle replied, ‘you are right, Geraldine;’ and after that final conversation, the most interesting study to me was of course the history of the early Church, where I expected to find, until you damped my ardour, the exact belief and steady practice of the ‘Book of Common Prayer,’ and of our articles; in fact, I had misgivings but on one point, the sacrament of anointing the dying. You may imagine then my surprise to find our Protestant historians groaning over the lamentable superstitions of those very centuries, which by some unaccountable inconsistency the Church of England calls ‘pure’—or must I not rather be compelled to think, by some inexcusable doctrine of expediency, for while all the other Protestant committees boldly renounce apostolic succession, and without scruple *leave* the ancient Church, the Church of England says, ‘No, we must not give

up these high claims and consequent authority, and therefore we must wink at the differences between our modern belief and that of the early Church !' And the consequence," added Geraldine, half-laughing in spite of her vexation, "the consequence of all this winking has been that they have fairly gone to sleep, for when people mistrust their faith they always neglect their practice, they must stand or fall together. Now what on earth can I do ? tell me, Mr. Everard : for I feel great difficulty in carrying my present perplexity to my uncle."

"Do you think then," said he, "that the Warden has no answer to give you ?"

"Indeed I know not what he can say, when the substance of my complaint will be, that from the evidence of two standard Protestant historians, he has deceived me, and that if a party of the early Christians were to be resuscitated, and come amongst us, we should find them all rank Papists !"

"He will tell you this," said Mr. Everard, "that you must not be staggered by finding, even in the apostles' days, the germs of those abuses, which in the lapse of centuries grew to so flagrant an excess ; and he will repeat what he has already told you, that it was not until the council of Trent that these abuses, which hitherto had been only those of practice, were confirmed and made articles of faith."

“Yes, yes,” cried Geraldine, “how well you remember, and how completely I had forgotten—oh yes, here is the note I made on that part of my uncle’s instructions,” and she read aloud from her little note book (p. 74):—

“The Church of Rome was corrupt in practice long before she was corrupt in principle; and although it would be difficult to defend some of the dogmas of preceding councils, she was not perhaps really schismatic till the Council of Trent. This is the date when those errors in practice which had crept in, and by degrees had been vaguely admitted, received the fatal stamp of Church authority, and, by this act of self-destruction, cut herself off from the pure and Scriptural Church, and from that time became as a dead branch.”

“I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Everard, for recalling this to my memory. I shall not trouble my uncle any more; but the next thing to be done is to read the acts of all the councils, especially that of Trent, together with that previous and important one, which I always concluded to have been the most guilty, and meant to question my uncle about, namely the fifth general council; for, if the Church of England receives the four first, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, there must have been something very particular in the fifth, to have made the Church of England reject it. Now, where can I read the decrees of all the

councils? for I will fairly tell you, Mr. Everard, that I must now read every thing for myself. I have been deceived respecting the resemblance between the primitive Church and that of England, and have therefore become suspicious, and on my guard against being soothed and persuaded into remaining in a Church that is not guided by the Holy Ghost: a Church which I was assured was infallible, only inasmuch as she resembled another from which I find she essentially differs! She claims four general councils, and, I therefore conclude, she would date the apostacy of the ancient Church from the guilty acts of the fifth; but no! I am now directed on to the last general council ever held, as the date when the Holy Spirit no longer overruled the decisions of the Church! What then am I to think of these half-admitted, half-rejected intermediate councils? and what became of Christ's promise to be with the rulers and pastors of His Church, *always* even unto the end of the world? I must have particulars of the fifth council. Where was it convoked?

"At Constantinople," replied Mr. Everard, "and condemned the heresy of Macedonius against the divinity of the Holy Ghost."

"Now, can the Church of England venture to doubt this council?" enquired Geraldine; "Oh! she cannot, it would be impossible; I thought the fifth council had been that of Constance."

“No, the Council of Constance was the sixteenth,” replied Mr. Everard, “one only intervening between it and the Council of Trent.”

“And what were the circumstances and order of its meeting?”

“It was convened as usual,” said he, “to decide on novelties advanced by heretics; and, as the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon had set at rest for ever, in the Church, the questions agitated on the two-fold nature of Christ, against Nestorius in the one, and Eutychius in the other, so, in that of Constance, did the Church decide against the errors of John Huss.”

“Of John Huss?” echoed Geraldine; “then this sixteenth council was the cruel one that condemned poor Huss!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Everard, “and if the Council of Nice condemned the errors of Arius, and the Councils of Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon those of other heretics, why should not the Council of Constance condemn those of Huss?”

“I do not exactly know,” replied Geraldine doubtingly—“to tell you the truth,” added she at length, “I know but little of the real opinions of Huss, but I know that he was cruelly deceived, respecting his personal safety at Constance, and that he was burned!”

“And therefore,” rejoined Mr. Everard, “styled and considered a martyr to the truth. But the truth must rest upon some surer founda-

tion than the violent death of pious and devoted men. If in the enthusiasm of your regret and sympathy for the victims of mistaken zeal, you thought yourself bound to embrace their opinions, there would be no end to your vacillations. You would reject the blessed Trinity, with the martyred Servetus ; receive that mystery again, and, with it, all the wondrous belief of the Roman Catholic Church, with the slaughtered Jesuits of Paraguay ; renounce the belief in a divinely appointed and visible Church, with the tortured Puritans of Scotland ; and then re-admit its authority with the Church of England martyr, Archbishop Sharpe !”

“ Certainly,” replied Geraldine, “ the truth, as you say, cannot be established merely by martyrdom ; and, if the articles of belief in a Church do not warrant the commission of violence, we must attribute these cruel acts to the party rage of a few ; though, with respect to Huss, it seems impossible to decide thus charitably, as the whole council condemned him.”

“ The ecclesiastical council pronounced his opinions to be heretical,” said Mr. Everard ; “ but all that followed was the work of the civil power, and would be as deeply regretted by all ranks and states of Catholics, as those other martyrdoms, which I have mentioned, would be by the Calvinists and Episcopalians of the present day.”

“ It would be, indeed, unfair,” said Geraldine,

“ to taunt a pious Calvinist of these times with the murder of Servetus, or that of Archbishop Sharpe; and we of the Church of England truly feel that the cruelties of the Star Chamber belonged to that age of violence, and not to the tenets of the Episcopalian Church.”

“ Very true,” replied Mr. Everard; “ the ages of bloody persecution are passed, thank God !”

“ And yet,” added Geraldine smiling, “ you are such a general explainer and *excuser*, that I am quite prepared to hear the defence of these persecutors, if not of the persecutions !”

“ Well, then,” returned he, “ you shall not be disappointed. In treating heresy as a capital crime, the vast importance of salvation was recognized; while he who by forgery injured the property of another, or who by violence deprived him of life, was considered less a thief and a murderer, than he who by evil doctrine would lead him to everlasting death. Now, are you prepared to say that this principle is not borne out by Scripture ?”

“ I remember several texts,” said Geraldine, “ in which we are told to avoid and fear a heretic, but none that would warrant my slaying him; except,” added she, smiling, “ I turn to the Old Testament, and hew him to pieces, as Samuel did Agag !”

“ The principle, on which the ecclesiastical court often refused to protect an *obstinate* teacher of evil

doctrine from the civil power," continued Mr. Everard, "was founded on their firm trust in a divinely appointed Church, which, in doctrine, could not err. Hence, every spiritual rebel against that Church was considered, not only in vital error himself, which would comparatively signify but little, but, by the dissemination of his doctrine, a pest to society, and therefore to be, as a dead branch, hewn off and cast into the fire."

"But tell me this," said Geraldine anxiously; "is it a *dogma* of the Roman Catholic Church, that persecution is lawful, and that faith is not to be kept with heretics?"

"These are no more warranted by the articles of faith in that Church, than any other of the atrocious calumnies raised against her. The Church pronounces on the doctrine, not on the person, and, so far from claiming, actually disclaims, the power of persecuting. Had I my proper books at hand, I could refer you to the doctrines of Catholic theologians, and to the oaths of the British Catholics. You shall see these in course of time. You will do well, however, in the meanwhile, to turn to some facts in our British history, in which Protestant faith with Catholics was so openly violated, and the breach of it defended with so little shame, that you will find the aspersed party shining in bright contrast to their accusers. Witness the treasonable desertion of

Mary, by the Bishops Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Roger Poynel, Sandys, and every other Protestant of note, for no other reason than because she was a Catholic ! Contrast this conduct with that of the Catholics, on the succession of her Protestant sister, Elizabeth, when, although the Catholics had become far more numerous and powerful than the Protestants, *not a hand was raised against her !* Take a view also on the other side of the Tweed, where the Protestant party had deposed their sovereign, in spite of their oath of allegiance, and where the reformer Knox publicly preached, that ‘neither promise nor oath could oblige any man to obey, or give assistance to tyrants against God ;’ his colleague, Goodman, adding, ‘If governors fall from God, to the gallows with them !’—while Buchanan maintained that Princes might be deposed by their people, if they were tyrants against truth, and that their subjects were free from their oaths and obedience. Such also were the maxims of Calvin, Beza, and the Huguenots of France : but, mark me, recrimination is not argument, and I lead you to search for these, and innumerable other such records of Protestants breaking faith with Catholics, to prove what ? why, that the wild fanaticism of individuals is not to be visited on the body ; and in repeating that which you have often heard enforced—namely, that the *accredited doctrines* of a community are the test by which alone

that community must be tried, I must add, that in vain will the enemies of the Catholic Church seek in her Creed for that vile hackneyed calumny of ‘not keeping faith with heretics!’ But to return to the Council of Constance, and the uncertainty respecting its infallibility, what is your present feeling concerning it?”

“Why, the case appears to be plainly this,” said Geraldine; “the Church of England *almost* receives the Council of Constance, because she cannot afford, in point of date, to vote the Catholic Church guilty, while there was no substance of a Church to oppose to its authority; and she cannot help *almost* admitting that the ‘private interpretation of John Huss was no more lawful than that of Arius, of Nestorius, or of Eutychius, against the duly ordained and duly convened pastors of the Church. But then she *almost* rejects both the council and the admission, because some of the opinions of Huss were adopted at the Reformation, and Huss himself considered to be a glorious martyr to the Protestant cause. But I cannot ‘almost admit’ and ‘almost reject!’ and being obliged to make my final choice between the assembled Church and one man, I must stand by the former, and receive the Council of Constance, in spite of my commiseration for John Huss, and my indignation against the Emperor Sigismund.”

Geraldine having read all that she could find in

the Protestant library of Elverton Hall, on the subject of the faith of the early Church, and the decisions of councils received by the Church of England, now made up her mind to ask her uncle for the book, hitherto withheld from her, in which the Catholic Church sets forth the proofs on which she founds her claim to conformity with those contested ages of pure Christianity. "If I find that this work," thought she, "is but a plausible piece of eloquence, or if it venture to advance anything without proper references, I shall then so far take comfort, that I shall enquire no farther into the wanderings or the quarrels of *any* community, but rest where I am, in the nominal Church of England, feeling the utmost sorrow for her hollowness, her deceit; but still, finding that she is no worse than her neighbours, I shall suppose that God has confounded the councils of His Church throughout the world!" Geraldine was urged on to make the immediate trial of the conformity of Catholics with the primitive Church, by the approaching departure of the Warden for Oxford, and she determined on that very day to state the result of her late enquiry into Protestant Church history, and to petition for the book sent her by Sir Eustace de Grey.

Her heart beat violently as she went through her appointed task, although somewhat supported by the presence of Mr. Everard; and she could

scarcely articulate her determination to know what was to be said on the Catholic side of the question.

“The mass of the laity, and especially women,” said the Warden, “are not required to possess controversial knowledge of a Church, against which their rulers have seen such just cause to protest !”

“Indeed, uncle, it appears to me,” said Geraldine, rallying her courage, “that every woman ‘protesting,’ should know something of what she protests against ! There would not only be more justice, but more stability, in her title of ‘Protestant,’ which begins now to appear to me, when without that knowledge, to be a vague empty name.”

The Warden’s brow was overclouded, and he replied very gravely, “I had flattered myself, child, that the hours of thought and care I had bestowed on you had not been thrown away, and that the clear and methodical manner, in which, adapting my instructions to your capacity, I had proved to you that your own Church was the perfect and the true, would have remained stamped on your memory through life !”

“My dear kind uncle,” replied Geraldine, “believe me that not one link in your chain of argument has been lost by me. I have remembered your very words ; for after each conversation I wrote all down, and will show you how accurate I

have been, whenever you like to see my note-book. I never know which the most to admire, whenever I refer to it, the learning, the zeal, or the eloquence, to which I have listened; and I feel that, on that side of the question which you kindly undertook to defend to me, there can be nothing farther to be said."

"Then," said the Warden, "what can you possibly require?"

"Simply to hear the other side," replied Geraldine.

"Cannot you trust the confessors and martyrs of the venerable Establishment to which you belong, without exposing yourself to the danger of your own less trustworthy judgment," returned the Warden; "when you shall have heard both sides of a difficult question, how can you be sure that you will reject the evil and choose the good?"

Geraldine paused an instant, and then said timidly, "I think that the Holy Spirit would direct my judgment!"

"You can scarcely hope for the Holy Ghost's directing power in your behalf," said Dr. Sinclair, with increased solemnity, "when you act in direct opposition to His express command of obedience to the rulers of the Church."

Geraldine with equal solemnity, and trembling with emotion said, "when at the Reformation, those rulers of the Church divided in opinion, the

people could not obey both parties, with whom lay the truth, God knows, I do not ; but I claim, as did the early reformers, the right of choice !”

“Everard !” cried the Warden with some bitterness to his friend, “this is your work ! By your dreams of universal conciliation, and your smoothing away of all vital differences, you have rendered null the work I had thought effected. And this you have done for the second time in my family. Not content with instilling these visions of a reconciliation with Rome into the mind of the mother, where, blessed be God ! they remained but as visions, you must now impart them to the daughter, whose cast of mind and disposition it will not do to tamper with ; for with her nothing remains as mere theory.”

“Blame not Mr. Everard,” said Geraldine, distressed at being the cause of even a passing estrangement between the friends : “his plans of universal conciliation and union between Christian communities, would rather incline me to be a Reformer, or, as he calls it, a ‘reviver,’ of my own Church, than to hazard leaving it. But, if I may venture to say thus far, I feel that no one could now influence me ; I must judge for myself. You have assured me that I was right in my conviction, that a Church must hold *unalterable* truths, and I am determined to investigate which body of

Christians have held the apostolic faith unwaveringly down to this day."

The Warden, deeply pondering, now left the room. A few hours after this conversation, his travelling carriage was at the door, and, after an affectionate, though painful, farewell, the uncle and niece parted, the former retracing the road to his college duties, the latter remaining, full of thought and emotion, in the solitude of her book-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Tis *said* with ease, but never can be *prov'd*,
The Church her old foundations has remov'd,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands ;
Judge her ye winds and rains. Ye prov'd her, yet she stands.

Dryden.

THE day after the departure of Dr. Sinclair, Geraldine once more read the notes taken from his instructions, and then referred to those she had made from the Church histories of Mosheim and Milner. "I know nothing of logic and mathematics," thought she, "in the way of school learning ; but my natural sense must tell me, that, if the primitive Church was pure in doctrine, and the Church of England pure in doctrine, they must agree in belief. If therefore they do not agree in belief, either the primitive Church was in error, or the Church of England is in error, for truth can be but one !" and Geraldine, still retaining by her the Protestant records of the early Church, now opened the "Faith of Catholics," and was soon completely absorbed in the question of agreement between the modern Catholics and

the primitive Church. She considered that it would be useless to examine those points in which there was perfect agreement between the Catholic Church and the Reformed Establishment of England, namely, the ‘Apostolicity,’ ‘Unity,’ and ‘Visibility,’ of the Church of Christ, of which the Warden had proved the necessity; and she therefore resolved to confine her attention to those subjects of disunion between the Churches, in which they mutually appealed to the early ages of Christianity. In the volume now open before her, the plan of reference, first, to Scripture, secondly, to the authorized divines of the ‘pure ages’ of Christianity, and thirdly, to the decisions of the last Council of the Universal Church, was exactly suited to the degree of deference which Geraldine felt disposed to yield to each; and, turning to that Sacrament which had first roused her attention to the short-comings of her own Church, and which, from the united testimony of Milner and Mosheim, she found to have been undoubtingly received by the early Christians, she first read the ‘Proposition,’ or the real belief of the Catholic Church on this point. “The Sacrament which is administered to dying persons, to strengthen them in their passage out of this life into a better, from the oil that is used on this occasion, Catholics call ‘Extreme Unction,’ and they believe it to be divinely instituted.” Then follow the reasons for this belief,

Mark vi. 12, 13 :—" And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

Epistle of *James*, 14, 15. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Next follow comments on, and enforcement of, this apostolical injunction from St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and other fathers of the Church;* and then is given the extract from the Council of Trent:—"The Synod declares and teaches, that our merciful Saviour, who was willing that His servants should at all times be provided with salutary remedies against all the attacks of their enemies, as in other sacraments He prepared means whereby during life they might be preserved from every grievous evil, so would he guard the close of life by the sacrament of 'Extreme Unction,' as by a strong barrier." It then observes, that this sacrament, instituted by Christ, was first intimated by St. Mark, and afterward promulgated by St. James.

* The limits of this little publication do not allow of the insertions of these and following quotations; we can only refer the reader to the work above-mentioned, entitled "The Faith of Catholics."

Geraldine, with her notes from Mosheim at hand, then again ascertained that a state of purification to the soul after death was an article of faith amongst the Christians of the early centuries, and opened "The Faith of Catholics" at that part. "Catholics hold there is a 'Purgatory,' that is to say, a place or state where souls, departing this life, with remission of their sins as to the guilt or eternal pain, but yet liable to some temporal punishment still remaining due, or else not perfectly freed from the blemish of some defects, which we call venial sins,—are purged before their entrance into heaven, where nothing that is defiled can enter." Then follows the next proposition, inseparably connected with the preceding, of "Prayers for the Dead." "We also believe that such souls so detained in Purgatory, being the living members of Christ Jesus, are relieved by the prayers and suffrages of their fellow-members here on earth. But where this place be, of what nature or quality the pains be, how long souls may be there detained, in what manner the suffrages made in their behalf be applied, whether by way of satisfaction or intercession, are questions superfluous and impertinent as to faith."

Geraldine was pleased with the temperate and guarded manner in which this belief in a separate state was expressed, and then proceeded to the scriptural warrant for it, the first and most explicit

authority being, however, from Machabees, which, in the Church of England, is received doubtfully, and placed amongst the apocryphal books of Scripture. Before, therefore, she dwelt much on the offering for the dead made by Judas Machabeus, she determined to know why the Catholic Church retained, and the Protestant Churches rejected, these books, the principal importance of which seemed evidently contained in these very verses; and, rising from her present occupation, she sought her friend Mr. Everard, accosting him with, "Pray, my dear sir, why did the Protestants at the Reformation reject those books as apocryphal which the Catholics still retain? I principally refer to the books of the Machabees."—"Because," replied he, "they urge that the Christian Church could only receive the books of the Old Testament from the guardianship and sanction of the Jewish Church; and the books of the Machabees were not received as canonical by the Jews, neither were those others, which therefore the Protestants receive as doubtful, or apocryphal."

"That, indeed, was a strong argument in favour of the Protestants," returned Geraldine, pondering on this weighty reason. "I cannot think how the Catholics can justify their belief in the divine inspiration of these books."

"In the first place," replied Mr. Everard, "the Books of the Old Testament were compiled by

Esdras, and sanctioned by the Sanhedrim, during his life : how then could those books be in his list which were written after his time ? Of course, a fresh revisal must be made, a fresh sanction given ; but this was now the authorized task of the Christian, not the Jewish, Church."

" When did the Christian Church admit these books into the canonical Scripture ?" said Geraldine.

" They were admitted at the fourth Council of Carthage, together with that book of the New Testament, hitherto held as doubtful, namely, the Apocalypse, or Revelations. Now, if you receive this Book of Revelations from the authority of a Church council, upon what principle do you refuse to receive the Machabees, admitted at the same time, except on the plea, that, directly the Christian Church differed from the Sanhedrim, the Holy Ghost ceased to direct her councils ? Are you prepared to abide by this ?"

" No, indeed," replied Geraldine ; " but I was not aware that any doubt had arisen, respecting the Apocalypse, amongst the early Christians. Then the assertion of the Church of England, that she receives only those books as canonical which had never been held doubtful in the Church, is quite false."

" Not only the Apocalypse was long held as doubtful, but also the Epistle to the Hebrews, and

other parts of the New Testament; namely, the last chapter of Mark, the twenty-second of Luke, the eighth of John, the second of Jude, the second of Peter; and the second and third of John; while various spurious gospels and epistles were circulated amongst the faithful. In a previous council, held at Laodicea, these spurious gospels and epistles were pronounced to be such, and accordingly rejected; but still the Book of Revelations, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Books of the Machabees, were not formally received till the Council of Carthage, in 397, (for the progress of these researches was slow and deliberate) when the canon of Scripture was finally settled, never to be afterwards disputed, till the period of the so called Reformation."

"Then, do the Catholics receive as canonical, all those books termed Apocryphal by Protestants?"

"They do so. No Catholic reads or listens with doubt to any part of the written word, being assured, that, if doubtful, these books would have been rejected by his Church, together with the Gospel of St. Peter, and other spurious works."

"Thank you, my kind friend," said Geraldine; all this has been very interesting to me."

"And yet," said Mr. Everard, "it has been extraneous to the object you have immediately in view, that of proving the conformity of the present Catholic Church with the early ages of faith, an

object which, woman-like, you quit directly some new opening for research presents itself."

"But this account of the reception and rejection of the true and spurious books of the written word, is useful, as well as interesting," replied Geraldine.

"It is so," said he, "and therefore it was not until I had given the information you desired, that I reminded you of your main object."

"The conformity of the modern Catholic with the primitive Catholic Church, is certainly the principal point at present," replied she; "but, although this conformity, which I now have scarcely a doubt of proving, ought to decide at once my preference of this Catholic and unchangeable Church, still my Protestant habit of investigation leads me to find such interest in proving all things from Scripture, that I cannot relinquish the chief value of this Catholic book." And having now been convinced that she dared no more reject the Book of Machabees, than that of Revelations, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, received solely on the divinely directed decision of the Church, Geraldine returned with fresh pleasure to the account of the offering made by Judas Machabeus, in the second book, twelfth chapter, from the forty-third to the forty-sixth verse:—"Judas, the valiant commander, having made a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead,

thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For, if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And, because he considered, that they, who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."

The Scriptural references for that place of departed spirits, where they are detained till purified from all stain, are as follows:—*St. Peter* iii. 18, 19, 20.—"Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but brought to life in the spirit. In which also he came and preached to those spirits that were in prison, which had been incredulous, (or, in the Protestant version, *disobedient*) when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noah."

Then the warrant for believing that, in this prison, a purifying process takes place:—"And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. For other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it of what sort it

is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's works burn, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire!" Geraldine had, from the writings of some old divines, and from the conversation of her uncle, the Provost, long held a vague belief in the separate state of souls. She had also been internally convinced, that purification was essential to many, who departed this life; having built on the only sure foundation, but whose imperfect tempers, and other defilements, must be purged, before the soul could enter the "New Jerusalem," of which it is said,—“There shall not enter into it anything defiled.” “Yes,” thought she, “purification even to a faithful soul, is, from the apostle's testimony, clear enough: still I do not see that this process must necessarily take place in that ‘prison,’ and not be instantaneously effected at the day of final judgment.” She then had recourse to the only method left for the Protestant to arrive at the true sense of Scripture in difficult passages, namely, that of abiding by the sense of a word when once it has been ascertained, by its simple position, in any plain part of Scripture: and, having fixed the meaning of the word ‘prison,’ from St. Peter's account of it, she turned to those parables of Christ, in which, when the offender is ‘cast into prison,’ he has to ‘pay the uttermost farthing,’ before his release. After

dwelling on this, Geraldine was pleased to see the following extracts from those early Fathers, who are equally claimed by the Established, as by the Catholic, Church:—Third century,—St. Cyprian. —“It is one thing to be a petitioner for pardon, another to arrive at glory: one to be cast into prison, and not go out thence till the last farthing be paid, and another to receive at once the reward of faith and virtue: one, in punishment of sin, to be purified by long suffering, and purged by long fire, and another, to have expiated all sins by previous suffering: one, in fine, at the day of Judgment, to *wait* the sentence of the Lord, another to receive an immediate crown from Him.” Then follow the same sentiments on the text, and comments on the word ‘prison,’ from Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, St. Basil, St. Cyril, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and a long train of holy and orthodox writers, terminating with St. Augustine, who, after much learned comment, adds this aspiration: —“Cleanse me so in this life, make me such, that I may not stand in need of that purifying fire, designed for those who shall be saved yet so as by fire.”

Extracts from the Liturgies of the early Churches of Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, and others, proved the union of belief in the doctrine of a separate state, and Geraldine, having finished these,

read the following from the fourth Council of Carthage:—"Penitents, who have carefully submitted to the laws of the Church, should they accidentally die on the road, or by sea, where no assistance can be given, shall be remembered in the prayers and offerings of the faithful."

From this early council, in the pure ages of the Church, the last appeal was to the final Council of Trent, which states as follows:—"As the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has taught in her councils, from the sacred writings, and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, and this synod has now recently declared that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar,—Therefore, this holy synod gives her commands to the bishops to be particularly careful that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, which has been delivered by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be taught, and held, and believed, and be every where preached; that all abstruse and subtle questions, which tend not to edification, and from which piety seldom draws any advantage, be avoided in public discourses before the people."

The next point of faith noted down to have been held by the early Christians, was the intercessory prayers of those departed into glory, especially the martyrs, for their militant brethren on

earth. Mosheim records the ‘superstition’ boldly, and Milner, after many regrets and excuses, owns the same fatal corruption. Geraldine had passed over the *sentiments* of both historians, and had simply noted the *fact*, that, in the first five centuries of the Church, Christians implored the intercessory prayers of the martyrs, and other departed saints. She now turned to the ‘Faith of Catholics,’ and read,—“Catholics are persuaded that the angels and saints in heaven, replenished with charity, pray for us, the fellow members of the latter here on earth; that they rejoice in our conversion; that, seeing God, they see and know in Him all things suitable to their happy state; and that God may be inclined to hear their requests made in our behalf, and, for their sakes, may grant us many favours;—therefore we believe that it is good and profitable to invoke their intercession. Can this mode of intercession be more injurious to Christ our *Mediator*, than it is for one Christian to beg the prayers of another? However, Catholics are taught not so to rely on the prayers of others, as to neglect their own duty to God, in imploring his divine mercy and goodness, in mortifying the deeds of the flesh, in despising the world, in loving and serving God and their neighbours, in following the footsteps of Christ our Lord, who is the way, the truth, and the life, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever: Amen.”

Touched by the sentiments here expressed, Geraldine read this point of Catholic doctrine twice, and then, without dwelling at that time on the triple reference which followed, to Scripture, to the Fathers, and to the Church councils, opened her note book again, and found that miraculous powers of healing, and other supernatural gifts, were believed to remain in the Church of Christ during the early ages : and now, re-opening her Catholic book, she searched for the real doctrine of Catholics on that point. Not meeting with the subject directly, she turned to the table of contents, under the title of ‘Miracles,’ or ‘miraculous gifts;’ but in vain; till having, in the hope of discovering the subject under a different head, turned over every leaf in the book, and being reluctant again to disturb Mr. Everard, she endeavoured fruitlessly to unravel the mystery of so important an omission as that of ‘miracles,’ in a book professing to state the ‘faith of Catholics.’ No opportunity occurred of consulting her learned friend till the evening, when, having expressed her surprise at having been baffled where she had the least expected it, Mr. Everard increased this surprise still more, by asking “how she came to expect, amongst the vital doctrines of Catholics, that which was optional to all, and forced on none?”

“Do you really mean, Mr. Everard, that Catholics do not believe in miracles?”

“They must, as true Catholics,” replied he, “believe in the miracles of the Old and New Testament; but I repeat that the Church forces on no one the belief in any later fact of supernatural intervention.”

“Then why do they choose to believe in such perpetual wonders as are occurring, or appear to occur, in their Church, till Catholics have become the laughing-stock of Protestants?”

“They are not forced to credit, but, at the same time, they are not forced to discredit, those manifestations of supernatural intervention, to which, if attested by well accredited authority, they yield historical belief. The enlightened Catholic owns, with pious gratitude, that the *power* of miracles has continued in the Church of God; for he finds no warrant, either in Scripture or ecclesiastic record, to suppose that any of the divine gifts once imparted are withdrawn; but, on the contrary, finds every thing to confirm his belief that the promises of the unchangeable God are for ever. The well instructed Catholic feels assured, therefore, that God has continued in and by his Church, miraculous powers; but he expects the manifestation of them to be but seldom, and when they do take place, he is ready to own that the judgments of the Lord are inscrutable, and his ways past finding out!”

“The belief of the *enlightened* Catholic is per-

fectly comprehensible and beautiful," said Geraldine; "but that same belief in weak and ignorant minds leads to all that folly and superstition, of which I have heard so much to disgust and alarm me."

"Yes!" said Mr. Everard, "that same belief would lead the ignorant and weak to expect that, on every occasion seemingly important, within the narrow circle of their intelligence, God would vouchsafe a miracle. Their own especial place of worship, their favourite saint, his relics, and representation, stand in the foreground of their limited view, and they are ready to believe in perpetual wonders respecting them. Still, in the credulity of the most ignorant Catholic—mark this, Geraldine, the germ of truth is there, in the persuasion that God Almighty's love and watchfulness are ever with his Church, and that ministering spirits hover round its courts."

CHAPTER XV.

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so heaven has will'd, we die;
Not e'en the tenderest heart and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh.

Keeble.

AND here, for a time, Geraldine paused, not from thought, for that was impossible, but from giving utterance to the results of her unremitting labours, even to Mr. Everard. And there were moments when she looked so ill, and the continued excitement of her studies gave so hectic a glow to her cheek, that her two attached friends became anxious to give a change to her thoughts, and rejoiced when, on the 8th of October, 183-, the authorities of Elverton gave public notice that the parish church and chapels were to be re-opened on the following Sunday, and that no restriction was to be henceforth imposed on the parishioners, beyond that of not frequenting the new burial ground, in which the victims of the late disease had been interred.

Sunday came, and the sun shone forth in splendour to grace the day of gladness. The church

of the valley was thronged, and the countenance of the Reverend Edmund Sinclair, as he once more addressed his congregation, beamed with holy joy. The text was from the sixty-second Psalm, "In God is my health and my glory, the rock of my might, and in God is my trust;" and most eloquently did the preacher impress on the hearts of his hearers the gratitude due to the First Great Cause of deliverance from the late awful visitation. In the town of Elverton, the church and chapels were equally crowded, and the meeting-houses thronged to suffocation. Nought but kindness and sympathy for a time was felt between the hitherto contending parties in the neighbourhood, and the lovers of peace and conciliation began to hope, that health of mind would unite with health of body to render that beautiful part of ——shire

"A little spot in mercy lent,
A home before the grave."

Visitors flocked to the hall, and Katherine Graham, who had lately begun to watch her friend with anxiety, was greatly pleased, as well as surprised, to find Geraldine denied to none, and cheerful and friendly to all, entering with apparent ease of heart into various plans of re-union with the families around, and scarcely once reverting with regret to the constant interruption she now sustained, from the sociability run rampant, which had seized on all the neighbourhood. The fact

was, that Geraldine, after long indecision of purpose, had now resolved to seek an interview with the Catholic priest of Elverton, as soon as she could do so without risk to the friendship between her uncle and Mr. Everard; and when, after severe conflict, a fixed resolution is formed, there is peace, even before this resolution can be acted upon; and while the cherished under-current of thought lies hidden beneath, the mind, become master of itself, can lend a gay and quiescent attention to all around.

Amongst the several topics of conversation brought by the visitors to the Hall, was the discovery that, during the past months of the disease, when the Abbey Hill had been deserted by even the children of the town, the small inner court of the ruin had been floored and roofed, and a window of richly painted glass inserted in the still perfect carved work of the arch at the eastern extremity. Walls had also been raised, to form a small but complete residence within the vast fabric; and the whole had been so skilfully arranged, that no change was perceptible from without, excepting that of the painted window. No one, however, could arrive at any certainty respecting the perpetrator of these innovations on property hitherto possessed by the corporation of the town, and which, from the pride attached to its singular beauty, it was supposed could never have become

the property of any individual but at an enormous pecuniary sacrifice. Geraldine, who had immediately guessed the whole to be the work of Sir Eustace de Grey, now hesitated, as she remembered the impoverished fortune of the young Catholic; and fixed the deed more upon Mr. Everard, whose enthusiasm for the ancient worship would lead him to delight in its restoration, in buildings erected in former days for that purpose, where all would be in harmony with the dignity and pomp of the Catholic ritual. But Mr. Everard would own to no more than the painted window, on which he expatiated both as artist and antiquary, appealing to the learned "Whitaker" for sympathy and support. "Yes!" said he, after a digression to piers, arches, transepts, and the date of brickwork, and returning to his cherished window, "Yes! our ancestors were a serious thoughtful race of men. The habits of their minds were religious, however they might sometimes deviate in their acts. They loved to see the dim religious light through the devotional glow of painted glass. Ah! how unlike the stare and glare of our modern chapels!"

"And when are we again to visit the ruin, and see this new Catholic chapel," said Geraldine.

"Church! not chapel," rejoined Mr. Everard. "The church of St. Hugh, which perished with its abbey, under reformation zeal, now rises like a

phoenix from the ashes of its parent—the child, it is true, of adversity, but full of hope and native strength.”

“There is one thing you may confidently expect,” said Geraldine smiling, “that the Reformation Society, which also may boast of rising from the ashes of its parent, will soon come to Elverton for the anniversary meeting, and the battle between your painted glass, and arguments quite as brittle, may be daily expected.”

“It is marvellous,” replied Mr. Everard, “how averse the cold sullen genius of Calvinism is to the dignity, and how dead to the sanctity, of that feeling, which leads the Catholic to offer the best of nature and of art to his God.

‘Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipped God in spite!’”

“And is the present humble little chapel in Elverton to be merged in this abbey church?” said Geraldine; “and will that pious and heroic man, Mr. Bernard, inhabit the ruin!”

“All this is in progress,” replied Mr. Everard, “but we are prepared for opposition and delays of all kinds,—open enemies, timid friends, want of money.”

“Want of money,” echoed Geraldine, “Ah! if that be all”—then suddenly checking herself, she said in a subdued tone, “Do you think my father—do you think my uncle—”

“Yes,” said the old gentleman, “I do think that both your natural guardians would be displeased by your forwarding this work ; and, therefore, give it not another thought.”

Mr. Everard was here called away, and Geraldine, turning to Miss Graham, exclaimed, “Katherine, you seem to be so perfectly engrossed as to be unconscious of all the interesting subjects we have been discussing. Has this really been the case, or are you afraid to trust yourself to any farther conversation on the alarming increase of Popery?”

“No, indeed,” replied Katherine, “for I was deeply engaged in this tale by ‘Charlotte Elizabeth,’ called the ‘Siege of Derry,’ a tale of Irish controversy and bloodshed, in which I find some truths, which I think, my dear, your favourite Mr. Bernard would find it difficult to refute. I am in truth reading more for you than for myself.”

“Or rather,” replied Geraldine, “you find, perhaps, those hackneyed assertions which every Protestant can repeat, clothed in more forcible language by this clever woman, and you receive them as incontrovertible truths. Now, so far from being dismayed at any thing advanced by this authoress, I am ready to listen and reply to any extract you may please to give me, as we cannot apply to Mr. Bernard.”

“Well, then,” said Katherine, turning back a

few pages, “answer this grave charge, if you can. After describing one of the principal characters, who is intended to represent the body of the Catholic peasantry, the description continues thus—‘To show him the evil of his nature, and the peril in which he stood, as a helpless sinner, was the necessary prelude to humbling him before the Lord in prayer, for that renewing process which God the Spirit can alone achieve: and whosoever has seriously tried this experiment with a member of the Church of Rome, must bear testimony, that, until her bulwarks be levelled, the task is hopeless. The transgressor may be convinced, deeply convinced of guilt, but humbled he cannot be, so long as he believes that his own doings and sufferings can atone for the sin which oppresses him. Seeking wherewithal he shall appear before the Lord, the enquirer is met by a host of deceptive helps, absolutions, prayers, penances, almsdeeds, imaginary and purchasable merits: and should all fail on this side the grave, he is assured of purifying fire beyond its boundary, and efficacious masses to expedite the work, alike welcome to carnal pride, and to spiritual sloth; he is presented with a scheme, which offers him a self-righteous plea on one hand, and on the other dispenses with that sanctification which God has pronounced indispensable. And can it be that any person taught of the Holy Spirit should attempt

to pour into these bottles of rotten leather the new wine of unadulterated truth? should essay to patch their worn and perishing garments of rags with the firm fabric of gospel doctrine? should flatter himself that Christ will deign to rule in a temple where every species of idolatrous abomination is to cluster around His footstool, to obscure His kingly glory, to intrude upon His priestly prerogative, to interpolate His prophetic mandate, and, only as chief among many saviours, to yield Him the worthless homage of divided praise?" "

"Have you finished?" said Geraldine, observing that Katherine now paused.

"Not quite," replied she, "but, as you are so tired of the Protestant plea of 'coming out of Babylon,' I was going to stop here."

"Just as you please," said Geraldine, "one falsehood more cannot overwhelm me."

"No, I have read sufficient for thought and argument, in all these heavy accusations from the pen of one, whose love for Ireland and experience of Popery must give weight to her account. And now, Geraldine, what can you say?"

"I can only repeat what I have before urged on the subject," replied Geraldine, "that, while one set of Christians believe and teach that they are accepted *unconditionally*, and the other class believe and teach that they are accepted *conditionally*, they never can agree, and seldom understand

each other. The Catholic believes that in and by Christ he is forgiven, *provided* he fulfils the terms stipulated by his adorable Master; but that this obedience to His commands should be a substitute for Him who gave them; that *practical* repentance is carnal pride, and continued devotion is spiritual sloth; all these inconsistent assertions, these absurd contradictions, prove to me only still farther, the blind hatred against the Catholic Church, which Satan, as an angel of light, breathes into every Protestant mind."

"Dear Geraldine," said Katherine, "you are ready armed always to defend the Catholics, and, amongst other things to which you blind yourself, is the obvious fact of their self-righteousness."

"But, my dear Katherine, I cannot do more than read their accredited articles of faith, contained in their catechisms and books of authorised devotion, which give the lie to these infamous calumnies. Now, as you will neither read the Catholic books, attend the Catholic service, nor ask of Catholics an explanation of their faith, how can you judge so well as I can? You may call me partial, but at any rate I have taken the only road to impartiality, that of hearing both sides of a question."

"But, Geraldine, *how* have you heard both sides? Surely, with an evident bias towards one side; now this can scarcely be called impartiality!"

“ Still, supposing that I had done so, there was at least more approach to impartial judgment than in hearing *only* the favourite side. But, Katherine, let us suppose a judge, occupied during weeks and months in hearing the prosecuting side of a difficult question ; let us suppose that witnesses from far and near have been brought into court to prove the guilt of the defendant, but that the fact of his guilt is stated differently by every witness ; that one gives one date, another gives another, and that these witnesses wind up with mutual accusations and recriminations. Most assuredly, the judge prepares to hear the defence of the accused with a prepossession in his favour ; but what has thus disposed him, but the falsehoods, the contradictions of the accusing party ? Thus, indeed, was my own mind disposed favourably towards the Catholic Church, from the false charges and contradictory statements of Protestant writers against her ; but now, when her voice is heard, were she in her turn to utter contradictions, did I discover that, as her enemies assert, she had in one council annulled the faith of a former—that, in *doctrine*, Pope had been matched against Pope—that she too had accommodated her faith to the ‘spirit of the times,’ and the ‘advance of knowledge’—I should cast her also from me.”

“ And suppose this should, after all, really take place,” said Miss Graham.

“Oh ! God forbid,” exclaimed Geraldine.

“Why, others have, in a fit of impatience at the errors of their own community, and attracted by all that is so soothing to human feelings in the Roman Catholic Church, others have weighed her boasted sanctity in the balance, and have found it wanting. For instance, the great Chillingworth—”

“And you can bring, as an instance, the inconstant Chillingworth !” exclaimed Geraldine indignantly. “He who, in renouncing Catholicity, parted with those truths, which you, as a Calvinist, hold most dear ; and among the first of these, the mystery of the Trinity !—But it is ever so with those who, throwing off the belief in a divinely appointed Church, are left as wandering stars for ever ! No, Katherine, there is no reasonable possibility that I could ever act thus, unless thought, and research, and prayer, were to fail me.”

“They cannot be looked upon as unfailing, if pursued in the spirit of error,” observed Miss Graham, “else why are so many sincere and pious souls led into error, notwithstanding incessant study, and ever ardent prayer ?”

“There, Katherine, you have unconsciously uttered the strongest practical argument against private judgment that could be produced. We both find, from our knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and from our acquaintance and even

friendship with the learned and devout of our own day, that thought, and research, and prayer, *do* fail ! and that two pious and intellectual men, after heartfelt prayer, will, from the same sacred page, draw opposite conclusions on vital points of faith ! The only resource left to the Protestant, when pondering on this lamentable fact, is, to hope against hope, that both these enquiries may be sufficiently near the truth for salvation ; while the Catholic turns with delight to that assurance of his Lord and God, given to His Church, that the gates of hell—viz. errors in faith—shall not prevail against her ; and, trusting the voice of his Church, as he would the voice of God, his mind rests in peace—that ‘ peace which’ *indeed* ‘ passeth all understanding ! ’ ”

CHAPTER XVI.

A loftier strain—a deeper music,
Something that may bear
The spirit up on slow yet solemn wings,
Unsway'd by gusts of earth.

Keeble.

THE following day was Sunday, and the two friends walked together, accompanied by Mr. Everard, through the park, and by the river side, to the parish church. The discourse was on that day addressed to the children of the village school, and beautiful was the exhortation given to the little creatures by their holy and tender pastor. He was, however, suffering from so severe an attack of indisposition, that the sermon concluded abruptly, and, after the blessing, the clerk announced that there would be no evening service at Woodbridge church. After many enquiries at the vicarage, where Mrs. Sinclair assured the anxious niece, that her uncle merely required rest, Geraldine and Katharine slowly returned through the uplands to the Hall; and, on the latter remarking that no delicacy of feeling need prevent them that evening from seeking whatever preacher they

might be curious to hear in the neighbourhood, Geraldine owned her intention not only to go herself, but also to carry off her friend Katherine, to the vesper service at the little Catholic chapel in Elverton. "This may be our only opportunity," said she, "of going quietly, without being missed and questioned. You can have no objection, surely, to hearing the Psalms and Magnificat chaunted in Latin, with a few hymns; for you will escape, in the evening service, what you persist in thinking 'the idolatry of the mass!' Come, my dear Katherine, come and judge for yourself of part of the public worship of these 'self-righteous Catholics!' I have a book of vespers with the translation, and we will both put on our close garden bonnets and veils."

"But people will certainly discover us to be Protestants," said Katherine, "from the awkwardness of our behaviour. I shall not in the least know when to sit, or when to stand, and as for kneeling, I shall dread to do it."

"Cannot you do as you see me do?" said Geraldine, "for I shall watch the little boys in the surplices."

"Ah! I can scarcely trust *you*," replied Katherine, "and, if they begin singing to the Virgin, I shall not wish to accord with them even in position."

"But I will promise to give you honourable

notice," said Geraldine ; and she continued to plead so hard with her friend, that, in the end, Katherine yielded ; and, having equipped themselves as soberly as possible, they bent their steps at the usual hour, namely three o'clock, to the narrow lane at the outskirts of the town, where, in a row of mean and dilapidated houses, stood the humble chapel, unadorned even by a cross.

Long before she had taken any personal interest in Catholicity, Geraldine had attended the vesper service at the various chapels of the foreign embassies in London, for the sake of the music, and, at that time, had procured a book, which enabled her to follow the priest and choir with great facility ; and although the commemorations and vigils of saints' days make the vesper service rather complicated, yet this difficulty had been soon overcome by one, accustomed, in the Church of England prayer book, to seek for the accidental prayers at certain intervals of the service. In the little chapel, however, which the two friends now entered, the Latin book of vespers was useless, for that universal language, so requisite in the mixed congregation of the foreign chapels, was here exchanged for the native tongue of a congregation exclusively English ; and Geraldine, although a little disappointed to lose the remembered tones which she had now expected to associate with the sacred emotions of the heart, yet acknow-

ledged the judicious care of the Catholic Church, which, in guarding from every innovation the awful ritual of the mass, yet permitted a discretionary freedom with respect to the other services, when the change might be deemed profitable to a congregation.

The two friends drew near the altar, and found places on a form, where a gentle, pleasing looking girl, gave them her book, pointing out to them, that the ‘meditation,’ which the priest had just commenced, was on the Gospel for the day, which was the tenth after Pentecost, consequently the ninth after Trinity, as it is entitled in the Common Prayer book of the Church of England. The priest, kneeling with the two acolytes on the bottom step of the altar, thus read, in a low, but distinct and deeply impressive, voice :—

“ This day’s gospel is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who went up into the temple to pray ; and being designed against those, who confide in themselves, and despise others, let us pray that God would mercifully deliver us from these inward indispositions, which are so very much displeasing to Him. Let us pray : O Blessed Redeemer, who camest upon earth to be our physician, to heal all our infirmities, and on so many occasions hast laid before us the danger of our distempers, and the certain method of our cure, mercifully have regard to us this day, and grant we may

receive the benefit of what Thou hast taught us in this day's instruction : Amen."

As the priest continued, Geraldine, still bearing in mind Katherine's accusation against the Catholics' doctrine, as inculcating 'self righteousness,' gently pressed her friend's hand at the following words :--" Thou hast plainly shown us, that nothing can be more destructive to us, than to confide in ourselves, to presume upon our own works, and to despise others as being inferior to us. Thou hast positively assured us, that this alone is enough to make void whatever good we do, and, in the midst of a well disciplined and exemplary life, to be hateful in the sight of God."

Answer : * " Mercifully have regard to us, therefore, O merciful God, and grant we may receive the benefit of what Thou hast taught us in this day's instruction."

Priest : " O blessed Jesus ! since Thou hast been thus plain in discovering to us the malignity of this self-confidence, presumption, and pride, grant we may be afraid of these evils, and with horror start at the first thought of them, as at the approach of an infernal monster."

Answer : " For what are we, O Lord, that we should place any confidence in ourselves, or be proud of anything we do ?"

* Extracts from Gother's Evening Service, used at Brighton and elsewhere.

Priest : “ We have every day convictions of our own weakness, of our blindness, of our corruptions, indiscretions, and manifest follies ; we see ourselves every day running into variety of evils, and that whatever we propose, it is with so little effect, that there is not one hour of our lives but we are evidently put in mind of our misery, and that of ourselves we can do nothing that is good !”

Answer : “ Who are we then, O God, that we should place any confidence in ourselves, or be proud of any thing we do ?”

Priest : “ If we think aright, it is thy gift to us ; if we propose what is good, it is thy light which directeth us. If we avoid evil, it is thy grace that strengtheneth us : if we do what is just, it is thy mercy that enableth us : if we bear troubles with patience, it is thy gift that supporteth us. But if we think on what is evil, this, O God, is from ourselves.”

Answer : “ All our help, therefore, is from Thee, O Lord, and all our confidence must be in Thee.”

Priest : “ Hence, O God, as for any good we have at any time done, we now bow down and acknowledge that thou oughtest to be glorified, and not we to be esteemed, for it. For all hath been thy power and grace working in us, poor and helpless sinners.”

Answer : “ Glory and thanksgiving be rendered

unto Thee, O God, who showest Thy power in such weak vessels."

Priest: "But as for us, we have reason to fear, and to be humbled, to see ourselves so extremely miserable, as even to be in great danger of offending the hand that helpeth us, and of prostituting that to self-love, which is designed for the purchase of everlasting glory."

In this strain did the Litany continue, through several more petitions, and heartfelt acknowledgments of sin, the priest concluding with this prayer, which is also used in the Church of England:—"O God, who manifesteth thine Almighty power in pardoning chiefly, and showing mercy, multiply thy goodness towards us, that, having recourse to Thy promises, we may be partakers of Thine everlasting happiness, through the Lord Jesus Christ thy Son."

The congregation then arose, and the little choir began a hymn, apparently familiar to all around, as, without book, they joined, in a lower tone, with the voices which led this part of the service. Katherine, who had risen with the rest, now re-seated herself, fearful that, however unexceptionable she had found the humble and devotional prayers, this hymn might turn out to be idolatrous. Their civil young neighbour, however, having placed in Katherine's hand the little book of hymns, the latter, glancing her eye over the one pointed out

to her, again rose. It was that hymn, dear to the heart of every devout Catholic, from the pen of St. Bernard, ‘*Jesu dulcis Memoriam* ;’ translated thus :—

“ Jesus ! the only thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast ;
But sweeter far it were to see,
And on thy beauty feast.

“ No sound, no harmony so gay,
Can art or music frame ;
No thoughts can reach, no words can say
The sweets of thy blest name.

“ Jesus ! our hope when we repent,
Sweet source of all our grace,
Sole comfort in our banishment,
Oh ! what when face to face !

* * * *

“ Come then, dear Lord, possess my heart,
Chase thence the shades of night,
Come pierce it with thy flaming dart,
And ever shining light.”

These four verses only of the abridgment were sung, after which, all again kneeling, the priest said,—“ Let us give thanks to Almighty God for the various benefits we have received from Him during the past week :” and a beautiful Litany followed. The most striking novelty, however, both to Geraldine and Katherine, was the long and solemn pause which followed these words,—

“Let us carefully examine our consciences, and endeavour to recollect the sins we may have been guilty of, by thought, word, deed, or omission;—let us conceive a great sorrow for having offended God.” This pause, to our two friends, seemed endless, yet not a head was raised, not a sound was heard,—till, at length, the solemn tones of the priest continued: “Behold, O God, we here prostrate ourselves before Thee, in humble acknowledgment of all our sins. We confess to Thee our iniquities, our ingratitude, our general abuse of thy blessings, and our daily neglect of whatever hath belonged to thy service.”

Answer: “We prostrate ourselves before Thee, O God, in the humble acknowledgment of all our sins.”

In this strain did the second Litany continue, followed by supplications for the grace of God during the coming week, the latter part being taken wholly from Scripture. Then followed petitions for the pastors of the Church, for the king and royal family, and for the English nation, concluding thus:—“Lastly, we beseech Thee, Oh! Father of mercies, that thy saving truth may be received throughout the whole world; that all nations may be united in one fold, and that all may join with one mind, and with one voice, in glorifying God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Answer: “Hear us, O God, and in thy mercy

grant our petitions. Give ear, oh ! merciful God, to these our prayers, and graciously vouchsafe to grant our requests, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Priest : " May the blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints, be our intercessors with the Lord, that we may be succoured and secured by Him, who liveth and reigneth to everlasting ages : Amen. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace : Amen."

Here all again rose to sing : but Katherine quickly sate down, on hearing the first words of the ' Ave Maris Stella.'

" Hail ! thou resplendent star,
Which shineth o'er the main,
Blest Mother of our God,
And ever Virgin Queen.

" Hail ! happy gate of bliss,
Greeted by Gabriel's tongue,
Negociate our peace,
And cancel Eva's wrong.

" Exert thy Mother's care,
And us thy children own ;
To Him convey our prayer,
Who chose to be thy Son.

" Praise to the Father be,
With Christ His only Son,
And to the Holy Ghost,
Thrice blessed three in one."

" Amen."

At the conclusion of this last hymn, the Bless-

ing was given, and many of the congregation, after a decent pause, arose to depart: Katherine and Geraldine also prepared to leave the chapel, but, perceiving that a troop of boys and girls were advancing to the rails of the altar, they remained to hear, for the first time, a public explanation of the Catholic Catechism. To Geraldine, who had now deeply studied every part of the Catholic doctrine, this unexpected addition to their instruction was still more interesting on Katherine's account, than on her own, and she listened, therefore, with double pleasure, to everything likely to prove the holiness of that faith, to which she was in heart attached.

“ Well ! my dear friend,” said Katherine, as the two friends returned in the deepening twilight to the Hall, “ you expect me to acknowledge that I was both surprised and gratified ; and I will not obstinately refuse to make this avowal. Had that devout-looking man uttered extemporarily the prayers we listened to, I should merely have given him individually credit for being an exception to the mass of self-righteous papists ; but when I read in their book of public devotion, those clear convictions of sin, and their trust in Christ alone for sanctification, I began to think that I had indeed allowed myself to condemn their faith on that point too hastily. . . . The first hymn, too, was beautiful ; but what a pity that all was spoiled at the end, by the Virgin and saints ! ”

Geraldine, who, to own the truth, had secretly feared, during the service, lest *her friends* might utter something far more offensive to Protestant ears, than what had really occurred, was in high spirits, and came readily to the defence of all that had been said or sung, as warranted by the testimony of history, to be the belief of the primitive Church, testified by the writings of the early divines, and as most consonant with the benevolent and social feelings of the human heart.

“ Oh ! dearest Katherine,” cried she, “ what can be more like a foretaste of the universal reign of Christ, than to join the glorified Church in prayer and praise, what more touching, to hearts ever craving for sympathy, than to feel this perfect ‘ communion of saints ! ’ ”

“ It might, as you say, be very delightful to the natural feelings,” returned Katherine, “ were it but true ! but until that be proved, I shall be contented to pray for myself, feeling the deepest sense of my coldness, my wanderings, my utter unworthiness to be heard, but still trusting to Him, who is touched by my infirmities, and who will never reject the prayer of a sinner.

‘ Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for grace,
Rock of ages, rent for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.’ ”

“Katherine,” said Geraldine earnestly, “you have witnessed this evening how Christ our adorable Lord and Master, is the life, the hope, the centre, of Catholic worship; the well-known and beautiful hymn you have just repeated, does not convey this more than the one we first heard in the chapel; and what could surpass, or even equal, that contrite Litany?”

“It was beautiful,” said Katherine, “I have told you so already, and it required no additional prayer to the Virgin: for when we have the privilege of access to the Father, through the all-sufficient merits of the Son, why trust to, or care for such inferior assistance as that of the prayers of saints and angels?—When Christ maketh intercession for us, what need we more?”

“Then why do *you* pray?” said Geraldine; what can your poor thoughts and words avail, when He, who is at once God, to grant, and Man, to plead, prays for you? Do you not, by the very act of prayer, suppose an insufficiency in the intercession of Christ?”

Katherine paused, and at length said,—“Certainly, were we to trust to our own reason on the subject, we should fear to intrude our imperfect and often guilty petitions on the throne of grace. We should, as you say, deem it an acknowledgment that the intercession of our Hight Priest was not all-sufficient—and shrink from the blasphem-

mous conclusion. But we are not authorized in trusting to our weak judgment on this or on any subject, where the Bible calls on us simply to obey. We are told, it is true, that Christ maketh continual intercession for us, which, indeed, seems all sufficient: but we are also told to ‘pray always,’ doubtless to keep us in continual mindfulness of our dependance on God for all things.”

“Then, your objection to the intercessory prayers of our deceased brethren whom we believe to have been raised to glory, arises not, after all, from the usual plea, that they are unnecessary, if not presumptuous, when Christ our intercessor is sufficient for us, but from the belief that you are a far greater favourite with God than the ‘just made perfect,’ and that the supplications of that pure creature, whom the Holy Ghost thrice pronounced ‘Blessed,’ the chosen Mother of your God, are held as nought, compared with those of Katherine Graham!”

“You are severe, Geraldine,” replied Miss Graham.

“No, Katherine, I only want you to perceive, that prejudice, and not reason, makes you reject the prayers of others, from a dread of encroaching on the intercession of Christ, when you do not dread this with your own prayers. You must, therefore, suppose a greater efficacy to attend the latter; but why?”

“Why, because,” replied Katherine, “the Bible commands one, and says not one word about the other.”

“Pardon me,” replied Geraldine, the Bible says a great deal, both plainly and by implication, respecting our prayers for each other: for instance, the great apostle, who was favoured with the assurance of being a Vessel of Election, yet disdained not to intreat the prayers of the Church at Rome.”*

“Ah!” said Katherine, hastily, “they were his brethren still in the flesh, there was no superstition to be dreaded there.”

“Then,” said Geraldine, smiling, “the benefit or danger of intercessory prayer, after all, depends on our body of corruption, our frail and perishable flesh; so that mind may commune with mind, spirit sympathize with spirit, so long as both are encumbered with matter; but directly that one of the two is freed from these fetters, all commune and sympathy must stop, as superstitious, and dangerous, and derogatory to the perfect mediation of Christ!”

Katherine Graham, not having, as usual, an answer to give, was grave and silent, and, on arriving at the Hall, the friends parted.

* Romans, chap. xv. verse 30.

CHAPTER XVII.

If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend :
If languages and copies all cry ' No !'
Somebody proved it centuries ago.

Cowper.

A FEW days after this Sunday evening's excursion, which, notwithstanding all her precautions, had not been effected with all the secresy she supposed, Geraldine again sought Mr. Everard, informing him that she was in a fresh controversial difficulty, and had come to him, as usual, for assistance. " I must first tell you, my dear sir," said she smiling, " that I wrote, some time ago, what *I* consider a very able essay, to prove, from Scripture and from history, that the Papacy was not antichrist. This paper, in the exultation of my heart, I showed to my uncle, a day or two before he went away, and what think you he said ?"

" He said that you had wasted your time," replied Mr. Everard.

" Exactly so ! His reply was, ' What sensible Protestant ever said that the Pope or Papacy was

antichrist? Your essay is well enough, but a victory over shadows is but a poor feat. You must not judge of the Protestant cause by the folly of some of its members. Protestants, as well as Papists, may sometimes write or say foolish things; but you must go to the learned and accredited Fathers of the English Church for your Protestantism, not to all those modern writers and speakers, who soon get beyond their depth in argument, and endanger the cause they pretend to support!"

"Well!" said Mr. Everard, "and why does the good sense and candour of this reply cause you any difficulty?"

"Because this very good sense and candour are completely at variance with the authorities to which he bids me listen. Just come to this table, on which I have collected all the books to which he refers me, and have marked the passages which treat of the subject in question. Look here," added she, opening an old volume containing the writings of Bishop Jewel,—"'Thus we have seen who shall be *antichrist*, and in what Church he shall be: that he shall be a bishop, and shall be stalled or placed in Rome.'

"Then again," said Geraldine,—"'The *Man of Sin*, and his errors, are revealed; men see and know, and detest the blindness wherein they were

led: the people forsake him over and over the world. Antichrist shall sit in Peter's chair, and Rome shall be the seat of his kingdom.'

"Now then for the Homily,—'So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, and sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, of whole Christendom, a horrible and most dreadful thing to think, have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices the most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years and more!'"

"Well done Homily," cried Mr. Everard; "and here I see you have opened its title-deed in the thirty-fifth article of the Church of England."

"The second book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this article, doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former book of Homilies, set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and therefore, we judge them to be read in churches by the ministers diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.'

"Stay, you must read just one thing more," said Geraldine, "it is an extract from your favourite Coleridge:—'If the Papacy, and the Romish Hierarchy, so far as it is Papal, be *not* antichrist, the guilt of schism, in its most aggra-

vated form, lies on the authors of the Reformation. For nothing less than this could have justified so tremendous a rent in the Catholic Church, with all its foreseen most calamitous consequences: and so thought Luther himself, and so thought Wickliffe before him.”

“ True ! very true,” said Mr. Everard ; “ and now show me your essay.”

“ I have mislaid it somewhere among my books,” said Geraldine ; “ but my chief argument was drawn from the explicit declaration, given by St. John, of that two-fold heresy which, he tells us, is the spirit of antichrist, the one denying the divinity of Christ, the other his humanity. ‘ This is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son,’ *John* ii. 22 ; and then,—‘ For many deceivers have entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh ; this is a deceiver and an antichrist.’ *John, Epis.* ii. 7.—‘ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.’ *John* iv. 2-3. Can any thing be plainer than that the mysterious union of God and man, in the person of our blessed Lord, was an exercise of faith beyond the reception of those who would not submit to the inspired teaching of the Apostles ? The Arians denied the divinity—the Gnostics and Ma-

nicheans the humanity of Christ, declaring that he took on him only the semblance of man, and only *seemed* to die on the cross."

"Perfectly correct," said Mr. Everard; "and did you prove from history, that these two heresies tormented the Church almost equally during the early centuries?"

"Yes! I had found from Mosheim, that the Apostle's warning was quite fulfilled; and now, is it not perfectly astonishing, that the Catholic Church should be accused of being antichrist, when it was she alone (for there was then no other semblance of a Church), she alone who pronounced on, and condemned, these antichristian heresies? what Pope ever denied the divinity or humanity of Christ? And the attempt to fasten on that office, the odious title and characteristic of antichrist, is so wicked, as well as foolish, that I cannot tell which is the most glaring!"

"I like to see you properly worked up to one of your fits of indignation," said the old gentleman, leaning back in a chair, and complacently smiling at Geraldine.

"I wish that I were only indignant," replied she; "but I am equally alarmed and saddened, at the never-ending contradictions of the best and wisest Protestants."

"Perhaps amongst the various calumnies which you are now enabled to refute," said Mr. Everard,

may be that of the Catholic Church forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats?"

"Yes," said Geraldine, "Protestant history has enabled me to fix this upon the Gnostics and Manicheans, under which last designation that sect, who abolished marriage, and condemned the use of any creature, as food, which had had life, continued to disturb the Catholic Church during nine centuries; but these absurdities were never charged on the Catholic Church, which had pronounced on and condemned them; that Church which elevates marriage to a sacrament,—till calumny, falsehood, and, in short, the whole of Pandora's box, was opened at the Reformation!"

"Hear! hear!" cried Mr. Everard. "Why, Geraldine, I think I must give you a new book to calm you."

"A new book?" cried she eagerly, "by whom?"

"By Milner, and called the 'End of Controversy.'"

"Oh—Milner!" said she, much disappointed; "I have had enough of Milner, in his suspecting the 'clear views' of the apostles!"

"But this is not by Joseph Milner, the Calvinist; it is by the Catholic Dr. Milner, late Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District," said Mr. Everard, drawing a sturdy little book from his pocket.

"A new Catholic book! what a treasure!" cried

Geraldine, as she took it eagerly from Mr. Everard's extended hand. "‘The End of Controversy!’ Well, God grant it may be so to me! I thank you, my kind friend. Oh, what a number of interesting points the author dwells upon.—‘Miracles, the criterion of truth—appealed to by Christ, &c.’—Exactly the subject I want; but I must first see whether Dr. Milner says any thing about antichrist."

"You had better look into the alphabetical index," said Mr. Everard.

"Here is nearly a chapter, or rather a letter, on the subject," at length said Geraldine, and she read for some time in silence, with only the occasional remark of "Very true!" "Very well said!" till, at length, she read aloud:—"The second character of antichrist, set down by Saint Paul, is, that ‘he opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God.’ This character Mr. Benson and Archbishop Watson think applicable to the Pope, who, they say, claims the attributes and homage due to the Deity. I leave you, reverend sir, and your friends, to judge of the truth of this character, when I inform you that the Pope has his confessor, like other Catholics, to whom he confesses his sins in private, and that every day, in saying mass, he bows before the altar, and, in presence of the people, confesses that he has ‘sinned in thought,

word, and deed,' begging them to pray to God for him, and that afterwards, in the most solemn part of the service, he professes his hopes of forgiveness, not through his own merits, but through the bounty and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.'”*

“You will find no *Protestant head* of a Church going through such acts of humility,” observed Mr. Everard. “It is seldom that a cardinal is elevated to the chief pastorphism, before he is advanced in years and experience. We find this hoary head, bending in humility and contrition, in the private tribunal of confession, at the feet of a fellow priest, probably his junior, probably his inferior in talent as in station, and from him receiving the delegated absolution. We find this same aged man, in the presence of his flock, thrice striking upon his breast, and declaring *aloud*, ‘I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed, through my fault—my most exceeding fault!’”

“Yes,” added Geraldine; “and then his begging for the prayers of his people; and avowing that his hopes of forgiveness rest solely on the bounty and grace of his Lord Jesus Christ! Mr. Everard! Mr. Everard! this is the daily public declaration of the head of the Catholic Church; and the Protestant reformers *dared* to say, that he

* Canon of the Mass.

‘opposeth and setteth himself up above all that is called God,’ and to call him antichrist ! Could they plead ignorance, when, having been Catholics, they knew those services and sacramental obligations by heart ? ‘ Oh, what shall be done unto thee, or what reward shall be given unto thee, *thou false tongue !* ’ ”

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tho' Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, holy chiefs,
Have made a battle-royal of beliefs,
Or, like wild horses, several ways have whirl'd
The tortur'd text about the Christian world.

Dryden.

“GERALDINE!” said Katherine Graham, some days after this conversation, when, having returned from a walk with Mr. Everard, she found her friend still surrounded by books and papers; “Geraldine! how long do you intend to keep up this mad search after perfection,—hunting after it in vain through the Protestant communities, and now, alas! tempted to rush into that ensnaring Church, from which the victim cannot escape, but through an ordeal of spiritual anathema enough to daunt the stoutest heart? Why be so much dissatisfied with your own Church, because you find that she differs from the primitive Christians? God knows, I am not particularly attached to your ‘venerable Establishment!’ but never should I dream of leaving her, because she was unlike a set of people just emerging from Judaism or idolatry, whose minds were evidently in a great state

of confusion from the rebukes given them in Paul's Epistles."

"Then why does she claim affinity in doctrine and practice?" said Geraldine; "why does she carry on a perpetual warfare between the spirit and the letter of her faith? why hold out that which she is ashamed to fulfil?—Oh, Katherine, she is full of cowardice, and therefore full of deception. She is a beautiful delusion—alluring, then deceiving, the soul."

"Why, I told the Warden all this myself, which I am sure was bold enough," cried Katherine: but you were then as indignant with me for it as he was."

"Alas!" continued Geraldine, "a member of the Church of England knows not what to think. He has the whole Bible put into his hands, and is repeatedly told that the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants. Accordingly, it often happens that a sincere and pious man, after much study and prayer, is led to form for himself a rule of faith, according to his view of God's will and his own obligations. But no! this must not be permitted; for this man is a 'member of the Church,' his opinions are shown by his fellows to be far from orthodox, according to the standard of the thirty-nine articles, and the authority of the Church is proved to him from the very Bible he holds in his hand: so, being a humble and candid man, he perceives and

acknowledges the express command of Christ to hear his ministers, and he turns to the rule of faith laid down by his divinely appointed Church. He reads, and ponders over the 'Articles,' and discovers, by their express declaration, that they do not claim divine inspiration, and only insist on being obeyed as far as they follow Scripture. Who, then, is to be judge of their conformity to Scripture? Himself? Then he is made dictator to that very Church which his Bible tells him implicitly to obey! What a state of confusion and contradiction for his mind to be in! Some relief is then offered him, in the statement, that, although the founders of the English Church cannot claim the guidance of the Holy Ghost to decide the obscure points of faith in Scripture, yet they believe that this assistance was vouchsafed to the Christian Church in the early centuries, and therefore they receive its decisions as infallible. The member of the Church of England, much comforted, then turns to the infallible interpretation of the early Church, and finds himself, as it were, in a new world, amongst a set of doctrines and opinions, so different from those of the Church of England, that, after this peep into antiquity, the poor bewildered man either consents to remain in the vague supposition that the Church of England, though she has cheated him, is just as likely to be right as any other Church, or he mentally wanders from creed to creed, or he

banishes the subject altogether from his mind—or what is left for him now, Catherine?—he becomes a Catholic;—and, what is more, he remains one!”

“You, Geraldine, remain a Catholic! With your understanding, aye! and pride of understanding too—with your habits, like my own, of independent thought and action. You can never remain in such a silly pompous Church!”

“Yes I can,” said Geraldine smiling; “I can submit to authority, when once I trace it from a divine source. You have often said of me, partly in jest, perhaps, that in married life I should struggle for supremacy: but the time may come when I shall prove your double mistake, by acting on the same one principle. For, as I hold the submission of a wife to her husband to be of divine appointment, you would see me yield willingly, cheerfully—with this all-important proviso, that I do not marry a madman or a fool! In the same spirit of obedience on conviction, I consent to obey a Church which is to me as the voice of God; for having once submitted to the proofs given me of the divine nature of her authority, I yield—and in this case without any proviso—for, in marriage, even a sensible man may be at times capricious; but the voice of the Church, having once spoken, changes not.”

“You speak here of her dogmas; but ah! remember the corruptions of her discipline, of her

practice: think of the deceit, the tyranny, the immoralities of priestcraft !”

“ Dear Katherine, I have, during the sleepless nights of the last month, gone through nearly a brain fever on this very subject. The dread of being irrevocably enthralled, like ‘Zulica,’ in the ‘Veiled Prophet;’ the terror inspired by the Papists’ dealings with the unseen world; their crossings, their Latin, and their secret prayers; with all the horrors of Protestant tradition, rush upon me, and I gasp, and stare around, exclaiming, ‘there is yet escape.’ ”

“ And why then do you not take warning by this merciful impression on your mind ?” said Miss Graham; “ this conviction, even at the last hour, of the rash step you are about to take—this God-send to you—ill as you deserve it !”

“ Because these impressions are *not* convictions,” returned Geraldine; “ and I look upon them to be any thing but God-sent: they are rather devil-sent, and will not stand the ‘Ithuriel spear of truth.’ ”

“ Truth !” exclaimed Katherine impatiently, “ all the world cants about truth, each one laying claim to it.”

“ There, Katherine, we are quite agreed; but I divide the Protestant seekers after truth into three classes. The first follow Pilate, and, having asked ‘ what is truth ?’ are content to let it rest in

doubt for ever; while the second investigate for the purpose of confirming themselves in every thing they had previously thought, and

‘Compound for *truths* they are inclined to,
Denying those they have no mind to.’ ”

“A very pretty lady-like way of quoting Hudibras,” said Katherine laughing, “and now for your third class?”

“My third class,” continued Geraldine, “are they who are honestly determined to follow the truth, even though, like the Jew, they find it ‘a stumbling block,’ and like the Greek ‘foolishness;’ and against both these obstacles has the Protestant to struggle in his conformity to the Catholic Church.”

“Geraldine!” cried her friend, “you cannot surely all at once change the whole bent of your thoughts and opinions! You cannot adopt, without repugnance of feeling, all those outward forms, and internal persuasions, which you have ever been taught to esteem false and pernicious?”

“I tell you that it is a struggle, Katherine.—The first time I made the sign of the cross, I trembled as though I were binding myself to some incantation. I cannot yet invoke any Saint, still less the Virgin Mother of my God, without a rush of previous misconception encircling and obscuring the truth I would hold; and I am still bewildered

and terrified on the subject of plenary indulgences, from the notion instilled into me all my life, that ‘indulgence was leave to commit sin.’ Nay more, I confess to several things, which, even when explained, I can neither admire nor approve !”

“What infatuation !” exclaimed Miss Graham, “to enter a Church in which there are things you can neither admire nor approve.”

“Now, Katherine,” replied Geraldine, “confess to me with your usual integrity, would it not be far greater infatuation to admit, as I do, the Divine authority of Christ’s One Church, and then to deny the several points of faith which did not suit me? This would be, this *is*, the conduct of nine tenths of the members of the Church of England, who idolize their Church as a whole, and disobey *on principle* half her commands. But this inconsistency, this ‘infatuation,’ can never be found with the believers of ‘infallibility.’ ”

“I will answer you honestly,” replied Katherine, “not because you call upon me to do so, but because I never have any other mode of answering any body ; and I will say, that, if you can once bring your mind to believe in the Infallibility of a Church, you are right to obey her, or, in other words, you begin with a folly, and are consistent in your folly !”

“Nay,” replied Geraldine, “call me mad at

once; for the character of madness is to reason correctly on false premises; but remember, Katherine, that I have as much cause to wonder at you, as you have to hold up your hands and eyes at me; for you had not an answer to give my uncle at the close of his arguments in favour of a visible and divinely appointed Church, possessing authority to decide on points of faith; and yet you seem to be just as contented to disbelieve this, as before he advanced any thing on the subject, which is to me incomprehensible."

"My dear Geraldine," replied Miss Graham, "I was brought up, thank heaven, with the Bible for my sole guide; and I want no Church to explain truths, which those who run may read."

"They run and they read, Katherine, but into how many paths do they wander, whose sole guide is the mere letter of Scripture, which indeed killeth, while the spirit alone giveth life. To use your own word, it is 'infatuation' to persist in thinking, that merely reading the Sacred Scriptures will impart to you the whole and wonderful scheme of God's dealings with His creatures."

"Then, pray," said Katherine, "why are the Bereans so much commended for 'searching' in the Scriptures 'whether those things were so,' which the Apostle had told them; and why is Timothy congratulated that, from a child, he had

known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation?" "

"With respect to Timothy, I should say," replied Geraldine, "that he had possessed that great advantage under due subordination to his Jewish teachers, who were the divinely appointed interpreters of the Law and the Prophets; for do not suppose that I think less than you do of the high privilege of Scriptural knowledge, not for the purpose of waging war with opposition of texts, but to 'ponder these things in my heart,' as did the humble holy Mary."

"Well! but now for the Bereans, Geraldine; how can you get over that commendation of their proving from Scripture those things, which even an inspired Apostle assured them 'were so?'"

"I cannot explain that text," said Geraldine, with her usual candour. "I think it all on your side of the argument: I can only give you its opponent passage, in the enquiry of Stephen to the Ethiopian, when reading the Scriptures, 'understandest thou what thou readest?' and the answer, 'how can I, unless some man show me!' But, Katherine, are you really so deceived, as to imagine that you have from a child taken your faith simply from the Bible, unbiassed by human opinion? Did you never learn your catechism, never listen to the pious conversation of your family, never

hear a sermon? What boy or girl ever forms a creed but from some bias given by others? If ever I wrote an essay it should be on Self-deception, as connected with religious liberty."

"As a child," replied Katherine, "I own that my impressions must have been derived from those of others. They could not be original, and how far they may have prevented the free admission of other sentiments in after-life I cannot perhaps tell; but, of course, I consider my own mind to be just and candid, and I have this assurance of thinking rightly, that, of late years, I have sat under a gospel ministry."

"Ah!" cried Geraldine, "are you not yet aware, that what is termed preaching the gospel, means preaching the Epistles! Do you not observe, that if Christ gives a simple command, or a simple promise,—a deep explanation, to prove that He meant just the reverse of what He said, is to be given from St. Paul? That the Epistles even are only valuable, inasmuch as they contain the eighth and part of the seventh chapter to the Romans, to which every other epistle, and all the four gospels, are made to bend? that, while these modern expounders talk of 'liberty,' they fasten you down with innumerable petty ligatures, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, so that it is in vain you would comfort yourself that the Brob-dignag chain of infallibility is far distant, while

you can stir neither hand nor foot under the glorious controul of fifty tyrants instead of one !”

“ Then,” said Katherine laughing, “ you intend to become a Catholic on the same plea which last year made you advise me to marry ?”

“ Exactly so,” replied Geraldine, in the same tone of mirth ; “ You had three aunts, a grandmother, and cousins innumerable, all advising and directing, and blaming you by turns ; and when you spoke one day, in self-delusion, on the liberty of your single state, I merely advised you to compromise for one tyrant instead of many !”

CHAPTER XIX.

A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller 'twixt life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill :
A perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command.
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.

Wordsworth.

AT this part of the conversation, Mr. Everard joined the two friends, and, much pleased to find them both laughing, enquired the subject, which when told, "Ah !" said he, "à propos of marriage, I have not forgotten, Geraldine, my promise to introduce to you the one good clergyman's wife of my acquaintance—the Protestant Sister of Charity, the 'Reverend Mother' of her little parish. When shall we drive across the heath to see her?"

"Oh ! I should indeed enjoy it," said Geraldine eagerly, "I should like a holiday from all thought and care—when shall we go?"

"Why, any day you like, unless, which would be perhaps better, I write first to my friend, the

good vicar, and tell him that you pay him the compliment of letting him fix the day, his time being more occupied than ours."

Accordingly it was thus arranged, and, on an early day in the following week, the two ladies, with Mr. Everard, in the open barouche, traversed rapidly and gaily the twelve miles of cross country road, and, at two o'clock, arrived by appointment at the Vicarage gate of Charleton. Geraldine had been given a sketch of the inmates in greater detail by Mr. Everard, as they had drawn near the spot, and had listened with great interest to his account of the early attachment of that congenial pair—their struggles to conquer an affection which poverty seemed to forbid—the vicar's success at College—the subsequent patronage of a noble and grateful pupil—the gift of this living of Charleton—and the renewal of vows which principle had obliged them to annul. Mr. Everard's intimacy with the inmates and guests of the Vicarage made the introduction easy, and no formality was permitted to waste the precious moments of a day, from which all, and especially Geraldine, had promised themselves so much pleasure; and while with affectionate respect she conversed at once freely with the mild yet cheerful being of whom she had heard so much, the Vicar's wife, on her part, had no unworthy misgivings that the elegant and accomplished heiress, of whom fame spoke so

loudly, would despise her unfashionable dress, and her one rosy maid. Calm in the perfect dignity of simplicity, Mrs. Forester gratified Geraldine's wish to show and explain all her plans for the good of the flock over which her husband presided, and she led the way, first to her little dispensary, where Geraldine perceived, on a slate, a list of sick persons, with memoranda of their respective wants, while shelves and drawers filled one side of the room. After some conversation respecting the best method of relieving the sick poor, the visitors turned to the other side of the room, where was ranged the Village Library; and, after observing for some time in silence the various titles of the works, Miss Graham exclaimed, "What a well-thumbed 'Robinson Crusoe!' and these other soiled books too, what are they?—more novels?"

Mrs. Forester smiled, and replied, "Some are lives of British worthies, some are simple tales of fiction, chiefly by Hannah More, in which the Christian duties are inculcated, but in which all controversy is carefully excluded."

"I observe," said Geraldine, "that books of devotion and of biography, seem, with these little pious tales, to constitute your Village Library; and I look in vain for the periodicals of the Tract Society, which I had supposed to be published expressly for the lower orders."

"We do not admit them," replied Mrs. Forester,

“for they are written in a wrangling spirit, and Mr. Forester objects to them also, as being one of the means by which his Church is being undermined. But I believe that the orthodox Church party are now publishing tracts to counteract the levelling and dissenting tendency of the Tract Society.”

“Ah ! poor old state barge !” cried Miss Graham, “just heaving on, when all is over !”

“I will leave this subject to you and Mr. Forester,” replied the wife mildly, and she now took them across the village green to the Infant School, where, according to Mrs. Forester’s plan of not forcing the mind, the little creatures were made more happy than wise ; and those, who were not jumping and laughing, were fast asleep on a large mattress at the end of the long room, till their mothers or elder sisters should call for them on their way home from the labours of the day. In the School of Industry, which the party next visited, Geraldine was introduced to the two little daughters of her new friend, who, having finished their appointed task, returned full of animation with their mother to the Vicarage.

“And are you not afraid of vulgar associations for your little girls ?” said Geraldine, in a low voice to Mrs. Forester.

“I should be,” replied she in the same tone, “were not strict silence preserved in the School

of Industry; but, during the one hour which Ellen and Lucy pass there, nothing is heard but the chapter selected for the day, which each girl reads aloud in her turn, till, by mere repetition, and without any painful effort, the whole school has the chapter by heart."

"And I trust *in* the heart," added Geraldine.

"Ah! that must be the work of the spirit," rejoined Mrs. Forester. "We may plant and water, but God alone can give the increase. With respect to my two girls, whose simple Christian education has been my first duty, this one hour, of which I speak, is the only one during the day, in which they are parted from their father and myself; and I have arranged that this hour should be employed where the force of example and of emulation should supply the place of their parents."

On entering the Vicarage gate, the ladies were met by the reverend owner and Mr. Everard, and the whole party rested and conversed in the shade of an arbour overlooking a richly laden orchard, till the early dinner was announced by the two little girls, who had not only arranged the table and sideboard, but who also waited upon their parents and guests with all the self-possession and politeness of the truly humble.

This little scene was at once so novel, and so fraught with interest to Geraldine, that, for the

time being, she fancied that she could willingly pass her days in that rural spot, where the purest affections, and the most heartfelt piety, were thus nourished by simplicity and humility. During a long conversation which followed, between Mr. Forester and herself, Geraldine, with her usual interest in developement of character, clearly traced, in the now softened and subdued Vicar of Charleton, the natural disposition which had been described to her by Mr. Everard, and which, in connexion with all that she had hitherto seen of Mrs. Forester, tended to confirm her old friend's position, that, although in nine cases out of ten a wife is a snare and a stumbling block to a clergyman, yet that redeeming instances were to be found, where she is the encourager and sustainer of all his better purposes.

The Rev. Granville Forester was the younger son of the younger branch of a noble family. Hereditary pride, the more closely fostered, because of the hereditary poverty which was equally his birthright, was to be surpassed only by a pride of character, which might break, but could not bend. Scarcely a trial awaited him during his brilliant career at the University, where success for a time cured all asperities; but the after struggles with adversity again galled and fretted his haughty mind, and at length produced a ready-

armed sensitiveness, which stood ever on the defensive. And when comparative prosperity shone at length on him, and from the perpetually mortified tutor, he became the pastor of an admiring flock, when the gentle and faithful being, whom in absence he had doubted, was proved to have loved and suffered for him alone, when all the softer influences of life were shed around him, still his habits of adversity clung to him, unknown to himself. Secluded in his study, his flock saw but little of him except in the pulpit; and there even the elegant and classical scholar was better suited to address the highly educated class amongst whom he had passed his life, than the simple congregation who felt their new Vicar to be more wonderful than profitable. Then it was that the wife, by precept and example, effected that which no other being could have ventured to attempt—the fastidious and morbidly sensitive Mr. Forester became, when she leaned on his arm, accessible to all classes of his parishioners. Not only the cottager, but the more *difficult* society of the tradesmen and the squire, was first endured, and then sought; and this personal intercourse with beings of whom he had hitherto known nothing—this acquaintance with human life in all its sympathies and vicissitudes—produced a change in his public discourses, which rendered them as useful as they were striking.

This sketch of what he had been, and was now become, to his flock, Mr. Forester himself gave to Geraldine, adding, as he looked at his wife, "Under the grace of God it is she who has wrought this change !"

"Well, ladies," cried Mr. Everard, as the party from the hall drove rapidly homeward, "what think you now of the celibacy of the clergy?"

"Oh, Mr. Everard," replied Geraldine, "ever since I have seen Mrs. Forester, I have been indulging in schemes as daring as those of your Utopia. I should now like the clergy to marry; but I should stipulate that they confined their choice to a certain class of young persons, who should be trained to all the duties required in the responsible situation they are to fill; that in the species of convent, in which these girls should be educated, no accomplishments should be taught except music, and that wholly sacred; that in their mental tuition the greatest love and reverence should be inspired for the sacred ministry; and that they should learn to consider themselves not only highly favoured in being chosen helpmates for the clergy, but also bound in sacred obligation to prove such by their docility, their activity, their charity, and all that we have to-day witnessed in Mrs. Forester."

"Ah ! she is a nonpareil," said Mr. Everard ;

“but remember, in your schemes, that our clergy are of every rank, from the nobleman to the peasant; and that an elegant and accomplished man, who continues, although in the priesthood, to move in the circles to which he was born, and who would conscientiously employ those very talents to the glory of God,—that man would scarcely feel that he had a helpmate in the humble creature you would introduce to him.”

“And why not?” rejoined Geraldine. “A clergyman, however high-born and highly gifted, if he be truly a pastor to his flock, can never esteem these adventitious possessions but as secondary to the one thing needful to which he is called. Besides, I do not wish to debar my *Reverend Ladies* from those mental accomplishments, and those mental graces, which would make them fit companions for princes.”

“Or for bishops,” said Mr. Everard.

“Oh, no! I cannot allow the bishops to have wives. I have a particular and rooted objection to that class of ladies, and think that their worldly and expensive career has been as fatal to our Right Reverend Fathers, as Peter-pence was to the See of Rome.”

“Now, let me tell you, Geraldine, that you are unconsciously copying the discipline of a Church, which, in this and in many respects I admire, notwithstanding its frail and fallen state, namely, that

of the Eastern Christian World. In the Greek Church, the secular clergy marry, from their own tribe as it were, namely, the daughters of the priesthood, who, as you propose, are brought up to a far more strict and retired life than the daughters of the laity, and who, from associating chiefly, if not entirely, with those of their own calling, have not a wish beyond."

"Then my scheme is not Utopian, after all," said Geraldine, "for here, you see, I have a precedent in the practical experience of the Greek Church."

"Yes; but with respect to the bishops, you will receive but feeble support from the Greek Church, for they are allowed 'one wife' during their life, and, owing to the prohibition they are under of ever wooing a successor, there is a Greek proverb illustrative of the superabundant felicity of a bishop's wife."

"But do they lead fashionable lives?" persisted Geraldine, "have they their Almacks and their operas? Do they speculate for their daughters, and corrupt their sons? Do they place their husbands in that awful dilemma of disunion from their wives, or infidelity to their God?"

"I think I can fairly reply No!" said Mr. Everard. "The same strict discipline which is exercised over the education of the families of the priesthood in general, would necessarily extend its

influence over the wives of the superior clergy. The class, among the Greek clergy, who lead a stricter, and, as it is termed among them, a more 'perfect,' life, are the confessors: they have no earthly tie."

"Look at those bleak hills in the distant twilight," exclaimed Miss Graham, "who had hitherto been silent; and look at that dark range of fir against the still red sky. I have been gazing at those objects which speak to me of Scotland ever since we left Charleton; and, while you have been comparing the two corrupt and fallen Churches of England and Greece, I have been carried back to the humble manse of the Scottish pastor, there to find all my sympathies and all my convictions confirmed in favour of simplicity."

"Well! well! I love Scotland, and Scotland's Kirk very much too; but observe this, Miss Graham, that for the Universal Church, which is to embrace all nations, all ranks, all dispositions, it is necessary to have in the priesthood men of different degrees of refinement and education. The pious and zealous body of Scottish clergy are taken almost exclusively from the lower ranks; the English clergy almost exclusively from the higher. I like nothing exclusive; neither did John Wesley, whose purpose was to form a body of underworkers to the more highly-educated Clergy;

and what a prize was lost to the English Church by the compulsory dissent of the Wesleyan Methodists ! Men who have braved all dangers, all privations, to carry the Gospel tidings to their fellow-creatures, and who, in unwearied zeal as missionaries, are equalled by few, and excelled by none save the Jesuits !”

“ Oh ! Mr. Everard, this is too much. Your philanthropy and liberality of feeling extend even beyond *my* comprehension !” exclaimed Geraldine.

“ Because my knowledge and experience extend farther,” quietly replied the old gentleman.

The carriage here stopped at an inn on the road, for the lamps to be lighted, and, after this interruption, the conversation turned on the various little occurrences of the day, till they drove into the avenue of Elverton.

CHAPTER XX.

Then, fainting soul, arise and sing,
Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for heaven is won by prayer,
Be sober, for thou art not there.

Keeble.

AFTER many long and fruitless endeavours, on the part of Katherine, to prevent Geraldine's farther research into Catholic books of controversy or of devotion, a truce was tacitly agreed on between the friends, and each took her own course,—Katherine exercising the powers of her mind in the investigation of the various points of doctrine then agitating the Evangelical world, and feeding her interest in those discussions by the perusal of the 'Record' newspaper, 'The Christian Observer,' and other periodicals, sent her by zealous friends,—whilst Geraldine, having determined that ignorance was a bad plea for remaining a Protestant, yet fearful of farther involving Mr. Everard with her uncle, by asking his opinion of the books to be procured, remained for some time contented with the three works, which, together with the catechism,

formed the whole of her Catholic library, namely, the ‘Faith of Catholics,’ the ‘Papist Misrepresented,’ and the ‘End of Controversy :’ till, suddenly calling to mind the old Missal discovered in the Abbey chapel, she claimed it from Mr. Everard, anticipating a deep and continued interest in comparing the Roman Catholic service with that of the Church of England, in the Book of Common Prayer. A few minutes after she had quitted Mr. Everard with the prize, and had seated herself at her writing-table, with her Prayer-book and Missal spread open, side by side, before her, she was joined by her old friend, with another book in his hand. “Here Geraldine,” cried he, “are the Vespers and Litanies of the old Church, which, together with the Missal, will enable you to find the source whence is drawn the ‘admirable Liturgy,’ of those ‘good Protestants,’ to whom the very sight or sound of a popish book of prayers is an abomination.”

“Will you not remain with me?” cried she, drawing a chair beside her own. “Do, if you have no better occupation, help me to trace our Church Service in the originals you have brought me ! Now, tell me the cause of that deep sigh, Mr. Everard,” added she, as the old man turned away.

“Nothing, girl, nothing—at least, nothing new... You look unusually like her who is gone to a better world,—that is all ! and at those times, nay always,

you may do what you please with me ;” and he seated himself by Geraldine, and drew the two open books before him. “ Now then for the Mass, and its Protestant translation,” cried he. . . . “ The Catholic Service of the Mass opens with the invocation of the Blessed Trinity, during which the priest and the congregation make the sign of the cross : this invocation and sign is omitted in the Protestant service.”

“ Then follow, in both rituals, verses taken from Scripture, equally humble, and contrite, and beautiful, but the Catholic selection, referring to the awful sacrifice which is the very soul and essence of the Service, has been changed by the Protestant compilers to texts of more general import.”

“ Next follows, in the Missal, the confession of the priest, lowly bending before the altar, and thrice striking his breast, while the clerk, in the name of the people, implores mercy on him. This is omitted in the Protestant service.”

“ Next follows, in both rituals, the ‘ general confession,’ with this difference, that, while the Catholics, with St. Paul, confess before Almighty God, his angels, and just men made perfect, the Protestants, having resolved to separate themselves from the general Church, not only from that on earth, but also from that in heaven, disdain to be looked down upon with sympathy by their brethren

in glory, and omit in their confession the union of God and his saints."

"But oh! how beautiful the 'general confession' is in our Service," said Geraldine; "I think, in point of fulness and of pathos, it far exceeds its simple original. Do you not also think, Mr. Everard, that the marginal translation in the Missal is much less beautiful than that of the Church of England?"

"You are accustomed and attached to the latter," replied he, "and so, I confess, am I. The language is both touching and powerful. As for the English part of the Missal, I scarcely know it, and you, too, Geraldine, will soon acquire sufficient knowledge of the Latin, to require no translation. Now let us go on to the 'Absolution,' which you see is quite as authoritative in our ritual, as in the other, with this addition in the Protestant absolution, that it is enforced by the declaration, that God hath given power and commandment to His ministers, to pronounce this forgiveness and loosening of their sins to those which be truly penitent."

"Then comes in the Church of England Service the 'Lord's prayer,' which, in the Roman Catholic Service, is deferred till the more solemn part of the Liturgy; then, after a few versicles and responses from priest and people, in both services, the Catholic priest ascends the steps of the altar. The

Service from that period is, in the Church of England, termed the 'Communion Service,' but, as to go immediately to that would be to omit the great part of the Protestant Service, we must now leave the Catholic priest at the altar, till we have borrowed from the Breviary all that is to form the Morning Service of the Protestant Church up to that point."

"Oh! have you a Breviary? I hope you have," cried Geraldine.

"Not here," replied Mr. Everard, "but I can supply the part of one in point of reference. The psalm, 'O come let us sing unto the Lord,' is the opening psalm in the Catholic service of Matins, the 'Venite Adoremus.' The Psalms appointed for every day in the year, as well as the Lessons, are all retained exactly from the Breviary. The glorious 'Te Deum,' (We praise thee, O God) was the joint effusion of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. The 'O be joyful,' 'Jubilate Deo,' also from the Breviary.

"That is," said Geraldine, "these Psalms and Lessons were all arranged from the Bible into a regular Church Service, in the Breviary, and the original framers of the Church of England Service saw no reason to quarrel with Scripture merely because the arrangement was made by Catholics."

"Exactly so! Next follows the 'Credo,' or Belief, which, in this part of the service, is that

called the Apostles', and recited in the Matins and Complin office, as well as in the private devotion of every private Catholic family. The constant interchange of Christian charity between the priest and people in 'The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit,' is the 'Dominus vobiscum,' &c. of the Mass, as also 'Let us pray' (Oremus.)

"The collect for the day occurs twice in the Church of England Service, and is taken from the Breviary, with Protestant omissions. Then follows '*the* Litany,' as it is exclusively termed, from its being the only one in the Established Church. It is compiled from the various Catholic Litanies, and wound up by that exquisite appeal to the Redeemer, as 'Lamb of God,' which is the 'Agnus Dei' of the Catholic Mass. Then follow detached prayers, of which that by St. Chrysostom is the last; and then, with the Apostolic blessing this part of the service is concluded.

"Then the second part, particularly denominated the 'Communion Service,' begins, which, in all but its awful belief, is the same precisely as the Mass, though not in the same order. The loud announcement of the Ten Commandments, preceded by the Lord's Prayer, is an admirable addition by the compilers of the English Liturgy. That fine collect, 'O Lord, unto whom all hearts be open,' &c. is from the Missal; I forget for which day it is appointed.

“ After this, we may rejoin the Catholic priest at the altar, during the Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and Nicene Creed ; for, in the English Establishment, they follow in the same order, and are literal translations from the Missal.

“ The sermon is preached at this part of the service in both Churches, and then (now turn, in the Book of Common Prayer, to the Communion Service) in each ritual begins the ‘ Offertory,’ (the name of which is retained) or offering up of the Chalice and Paten ; while, in the Church of England, alms are collected from the congregation, the clergyman reading appropriate verses of Scripture. Next, he prays for the ‘ whole estate of Christ’s Church upon earth,’ which prayer is substituted for the ‘ Commemoration of the living,’ in the Canon of the Mass. Next follows, the earnest exhortations and warnings of the minister, that none shall approach unworthily the ‘ Table of the Lord,’ followed by a general confession.

“ Then follows, you see, the Absolution, by the chief ecclesiastic present, together with verses from Scripture, full of encouragement and peace ; and now observe, that all this part, of Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, and of spiritual consolation and encouragement, is to compensate for the deprivation of that private preparation in the tribunal of penance, deemed necessary by Catholics before approaching the altar.

“ Then follows the literal translation of the

Canon of the Mass, beginning with the words, 'Sursum corda,' 'Lift up your hearts,' &c. through the responses and solemn preface to the 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth,' 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,' &c.

"Now comes the solemn part, namely, that of the consecration of the elements, and you see the Church of England priest follows the order prescribed by the Catholic ritual, but accompanied by a prayer, explanatory of the faith of his Church on this awful subject."

"What an embarrassed and confused prayer this appears to me now," said Geraldine, "and how characteristic of the compromising spirit in which it was dictated."

"Well ! well ! Let us now get to the end of the two Services, and then we will ponder on the prayer. In both rituals the priest first communicates, and then administers to the people, in the words of Christ himself.

"Then follows the 'Post Communion,' the 'Glory be to God on high,' or Catholic 'Gloria in Excelsis,' and the whole terminates with the blessing of the priest."

"Thank you," said Geraldine ; "I have followed you in both Missal and Prayer Book throughout, and have been greatly interested in comparing the two Services. How astonished many of the violent orthodox would be to find, that their Liturgy, by which they are ever ready to swear,

is but a compilation from what they consider the devil's books, namely, the Breviary, and the Missal! Now, let me have a Breviary, if you possibly can, or else tell me the contents of that book, the very name of which is, as you say, a terror to Protestants.

"I can bring you from my home, when next I visit you," replied Mr. Everard, "a Diurnal, which is the Breviary condensed, and could I have any intercourse with the priest here, I would let you see the work itself, which is in four volumes, one for each quarter of the year. It could not be well bound up in one volume, as the long lessons of the Matins service swell it to a vast bulk. The plan of the Breviary is this—Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Complin."

"'Complin' is a term with which I am not in the least acquainted," said Geraldine: "It does not sound nearly so ancient and canonical as the other Catholic services."

"Ah, but it is a very beautiful service," replied Mr. Everard, "and, excepting Matins, used to inspire me with more devout feelings than any of the other canonical hours. I can recal, almost as vividly as though it were but a year ago, the Complin service at a church belonging to an order of monks at ——— in Hungary. While lingering in that town, from the illness of the friend who travelled with me, I used every evening to steal

into that church, and listen to the choir. This service, as its name implies, is the 'completion' of the canonical hours, the last public act of prayer; and this very feeling, the obscurity of the sacred building, and the previous silence, all added to the impression made on me, as the fine voices of two younger monks used to chaunt in the old Gregorian tone, '*In manus tuas, Domino, commendo spiritum meum. Redemisti nos, Domine Deus veritatis !*'"

"I think," said Geraldine, "that I should find but little difficulty in following the Latin service, first, from my knowledge of Italian, and then from my remembrance of almost every part of Scripture, and of the Church of England Liturgy. So that, if I catch one or two words, of which I have no doubt, I am then enabled to finish the sentence. For instance, what you have just said is—'*Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit, for thou has redeemed me, O Lord God of truth !*' How consoling," added she, "is that nightly surrender of one's whole being into the care of him who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth."

"Yes !" said Mr. Everard; "and I never felt that more truly than when those two young monks so devoutly intoned the verses."

"And you, therefore, repeated them most devoutly," observed Geraldine, "and in such unusually beautiful Latin, that it sounded almost

Italian, and far easier to understand than the pronunciation you employ when quoting to my uncle."

"I pronounced the vowels as the Catholics do in all lands, that is, as it is pronounced at Rome; and, as you observe, the sound is much finer than in our college Latin, which Protestantism has rendered *national*, and not *universal*, as it seeks to do with every thing on which it can lay its contracting spell."

"I suppose," said Geraldine, smiling, "that we are all to speak Catholic Latin in your Utopia?"

"Of course, it must be used between those of different countries, when ignorant of each other's living tongue," replied he. "Already have Protestant Englishmen felt the inconvenience when abroad, of pronouncing a universal language in a manner which those of other countries cannot understand."

"I wish," said Geraldine, putting the Missal into Mr. Everard's hand, "that you would read me some more of the Church Latin, that I may catch the exact pronunciation."

He did so; and then, after commenting again on the sonorous and majestic tones of the Church language, Geraldine observed, that she found the Italian to differ very little in pronunciation from its parent tongue, except in the "ci" and "ce,"

and the "chi" and "che," which, she concluded, were modern corruptions."

"Yes," said he, "these are decided corruptions; but they have crept into the Latin at Rome, just as it has been found impossible to keep the Catholic Latin in England wholly free from Protestant innovation in sound. To you, however, I am purposely steering clear of either, and am giving you what I conceive to be the pure old Roman Latin."

"How much I should enjoy," said Geraldine, "following the Latin service with a Missal, in which there is a marginal translation. It seems to me, that any one of ordinary capacity must acquire, in a short time, sufficient knowledge of the language for all the purposes of devotion. The modern teachers of the Hamiltonian and Jacotôt schools, proceed on this plan of constant reading with marginal translations; and in my own case, with the German, I have found it most successful. Still, I have been told, that the poorer sort of Catholics are seldom seen to hold a Missal in their hands, and yet are apparently as much 'au fait' in all parts of the service, as though it were read in their native tongue."

"The Catholic service of the Mass is a representation of the great sacrifice on the cross for man's redemption," replied Mr. Everard. "Not a movement of the priest, not a change in the vestments,

nor in the ornaments of the altar, but has been explained and exhibited before the Catholic from his infancy. On entering, therefore, his church, he has but to look towards the officiating priest, and he can tell at once, and without hearing a word, exactly at what part of the service to join in heart and intention. When you go amongst Catholics, you will find all sorts of prayer books—the Missal, perhaps, being in the hand of very few, except on Sundays and grand festivals, and even then, some favourite book of prayers will be taken up during those parts of the service in which the priest supplicates in secret for the people around him, and for the whole Church.”

“This diversity of private devotion, during public service,” said Geraldine, “would seem strange to a member of the Church of England: but I conclude that these different books are written so as to accord with the established rubric.”

“They are so; and for those who go to Mass every morning of their lives, some new form of words must be requisite. In short, you will invariably find in the Roman Catholic Church inexhaustible variety united to immovable stability, and for a universal Church it must be so. Her dogmas cannot change—she cannot suffer a breach to be made in her walls of vast enclosure: but within that enclosure there is expansion, there is freedom! She is a glorious Church, and testimony

to her wisdom is rendered at different periods, by those even who protest from her. Listen to this extract from Sharon Turner's *England*, book II, page 28 :—‘ With all its defects, the *Church of Europe, during the middle ages*, was a venerable and splendid pile of moral and mental architecture, which had been, from pure philanthropy, built up in this country and in France by the Popedom itself, as it was in Germany and Friesland by English missionaries, and in Switzerland by Irish coadjutors, agents under their Roman chief. For ages it had been the library of Europe, the preserver of ancient literature, the friend of youthful education, and the genial home of all the learning of the Christian world. Its monasteries became the asylums of human comfort, and the protectors of social peace, in many turbulent and calamitous periods, and were often the nurseries for some of the diviner virtues of our ascending nature. Its *general fabric* was at all times a needed and effectual bulwark of civil freedom, against *royal encroachments*, and *martial aristocracies*.’ ”

CHAPTER XXI.

Could he his godhead veil with flesh and blood,
And not veil these again to be our food?
His grace in both is equal in extent,
The first affords us life, the second nourishment.
And if he can, why all this frantic pain
To construe what his clearest words contain,
And make a riddle what he made so plain?

Dryden.

THERE was one solemn point of doctrine which Geraldine had shrunk from discussing with either of her uncles, and on which she could not bring herself to speak even to Mr. Everard. This was Transubstantiation. All her doubts and researches on this point were confined to books, with unceasing reference to Scripture. Of all the points of separation between the Churches, this awful question of a miraculous change in the elements at consecration, is one of the deepest interest to the devout communicant. As a young girl, Geraldine had believed simply the words of Christ, and bowed in humble gratitude to a mystery of love which she could not fathom; in later years, her reason had been taught to consider the sacrament as a solemn pledge of remembrance and of

fidelity, but all beyond this as a superstitious dwelling on the material, instead of the spiritual, union, and a desecration of the awful majesty of God. Geraldine now came to the full investigation of this doctrine, and found ample testimony on the Protestant side amongst the divines in the Elverton library; while Milner's "End of Controversy," and the "Faith of Catholics," were the only books on the other side in her possession. But it was not so much by argument that Geraldine hoped to arrive at the truth. She read what each party had to say, and then turned again to Scripture. With respect to the most powerful argument, considered conclusive by Protestants against a miraculous change in the sacrament of the altar, namely, that God often demands our faith in that which is above our senses, but never in that which is against them, Geraldine found its refutation in the Gospel narrative, at the baptism of our Lord. To the eye of sense, the bodily form of a dove rested upon him; but faith demands our acknowledgment of the presence of the Holy Ghost: and to indulge in vain inquiries as to how far the plumage and muscular action of the bird were an appearance, or a reality, would be much on a par with all that is profanely advanced against Transubstantiation. In entering on this deep and awful subject, Geraldine was quite on her guard respecting her natural disposition of mind to re-

ceive willingly that which is mysterious, spiritual, and supernatural: but, on consideration, these were some of the arguments which had the greatest weight in convincing her reason. Were the holy sacrament to consist merely of bread and wine in commemoration of our Lord's death, then the reality falls short of the Old Testament types of this solemnity. Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine as types, of what? Only bread and wine? The manna from heaven, itself a miracle, how could it prefigure less than a miracle? Also she remarked, in the detailed account given by St. Luke of the first celebration of these holy mysteries, that our Lord followed the custom of the Jews, continued to this day, of giving, after supper, bread and wine around to the guests, in token of hospitality and good will. The last day of the festival of the Passover is concluded by the master of the house holding a cup of wine, while he repeats a considerable portion of Scripture. He then drinks, and gives to others to drink of the cup. The Evangelist first describes our Lord's observing this ceremony, from verse fifteen to eighteen, at which time He speaks of eating the Passover with His disciples, before He should suffer, telling them also that He shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God shall come. *After* this, begins the celebration of the mysteries, at verses nineteen and twenty; and the candid examiner of

this *twofold* description will see, that to quote the expression of “fruit of the vine,” as nullifying the belief of a miraculous change in the chalice, is useless, because it applies to the Jewish custom just alluded to, and not to the institution of the divine mystery. Again, when dwelling on the sixth chapter of St. John, Geraldine could not but perceive that, although in every other discourse our Lord explains all that has been figurative and obscure, yet, when the Jews are offended at such a trial of their faith, “too hard for them to bear,” so that from that time they left him, to return no more, he did not recal them to explain his words, which, if figurative, this merciful and *just* God would certainly have done.

Geraldine then examined the Calvinistic exposition of this chapter, in which this “hard saying” is made to bear on “predestination” and “free grace,” and pronounced it to be the greatest straining from simplicity. In verse sixty-three, which is the grand point on which the Protestant expositor rests, to overturn all the rest of the chapter, the expression, “The flesh profiteth nothing,” she found rendered by Catholic commentators to mean, that the fleshly or carnal wisdom of man profiteth nothing in understanding the deep mysteries of God. Geraldine could not believe that Christ should contradict himself; and after having said, “He that eateth my flesh shall abide in me,” that

He should then say that *His* flesh profiteth nothing. He does not here say *my* flesh, but *the* flesh : and she decided it to be impossible that this one verse, however rendered, should contradict the whole plain and explicit declaration of our Lord, beginning at verse fifty-one, to the end of the chapter. Nothing, however, confirmed her belief more in this perpetual miracle of Christ's love to his Church, than the strict "discipline of the secret," observed by the early Christians respecting it, founded on the command, "Not to cast their pearls before swine," and the persuasion that faith to receive this great mystery was the gift of God. This belief and rite in the early Church was attended with the same scandalous misrepresentation as besets it now. This discipline of the secret, as well as the ancient Liturgies, Geraldine found in the "Faith of Catholics," to which she now turned.

From ST. CYRIL of Jerusalem, (Fourth Century.)

"We do not speak clearly before the Catechumens on the *mysteries*, but are obliged often to use obscure expressions, in order that, while we are understood by the faithful, who are instructed, those, who are not so, may not suffer."

The Synod of Alexandria

(Speaking in reprehension, says)—"They are not ashamed to celebrate the mysteries before the Catechumens, and, perhaps, even before the pa-

gans, forgetting that it is written, that we should hide the mystery of the king, and in contempt of the precept of our Lord, that we must not place holy things before dogs, nor pearls before swine. For it is not lawful to shew the mysteries openly to the uninitiated, lest, through ignorance, they scoff at them, and the Catechumens be scandalized through indiscreet curiosity."

From ORIGEN, (Third Century.)

"Whosoever is instructed in the mysteries, knows the flesh and blood of the Word of God. Let us not then dwell on a subject known to the initiated, and which the uninitiated ought not to know."

TERTULLIAN, (Third Century.)

(Addressing his wife on the subject of her marrying an infidel, in case of his death.) "Will not your husband know what you taste in *secret* before any other food? And if he perceives bread, will he not imagine that it is what is so much spoken of?"

From conversations with Mr. Everard, as well as from her own researches into early ecclesiastical record, Geraldine had found that, to preserve this secrecy, tortures and death were endured by the early Christians. She then turned to the ancient

Liturgies of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome, Milan, also the Syriac, Nestorian, and Coptic Liturgies, all which she found to be the same with respect to the awful manner in which their belief is expressed (when the *faithful alone* are present) of a *change* in the Elements, and in a propitiatory sacrifice to the Deity.

Extracts from the Liturgy of Jerusalem.

“ Have mercy on us, O God, the Father Almighty, and send thy Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, equal in dominion to Thee and thy Son, who descended in the likeness of a dove on the Lord Jesus Christ : who descended on the holy apostles in the likeness of tongues of fire ;— that, coming, He may *make* this bread the heavenly Body, the life-giving Body, the saving Body, the Body giving health to souls and bodies : the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and eternal life to those who receive it : Amen.”—“ And may *make* what is mixed in this chalice the Blood of the New Testament, the saving Blood, the life-giving Blood, the heavenly Blood, the Blood giving health to soul and body : the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ : Amen.”

“ Wherefore we offer to Thee, O Lord, this tremendous and unbloody *Sacrifice*, for the holy places which Thou hast enlightened by the manifestation of Christ thy Son. Grant thy blessing,

O Lord ! again and again, through this holy oblation and *propitiatory* sacrifice, which is offered to God the Father, and is sanctified, completed, and perfected, by the descent of the Holy Ghost."

Liturgy of Constantinople.

" O Lord God Almighty, make us worthy to offer Thee gifts and spiritual sacrifices ; and grant that we may find grace before Thee, and that our sacrifice may be acceptable to Thee. Bless, O Lord, this holy bread. Make, indeed, this bread the precious Body of thy Christ. Bless, O Lord, this chalice, and what is in this chalice, the precious Blood of thy Christ, *changing* by thy Holy Spirit : Amen."

Alexandrian Liturgy.

" O King of Glory, make us worthy to stand at Thy holy table, and to consecrate thy immaculate Body, and thy precious Blood. Do thou, O Lord, by thy voice, *change* these offerings. Do thou, who art here present, complete this mystical Liturgy."

As Geraldine finished these testimonials of the united and exalted faith of the early Church respecting this high mystery of love, she knelt, in token of submission, exclaiming, "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief!" Her next thought was of that class of Protestants, who, like the un-

believing Jews, in a proud and scoffing spirit, had found Christ's words too hard to bear, and had sacrificed faith to the fleshly reason which would profit them nothing. From the wide spreading of this disbelief in the mystery of the altar, it would seem that God had permitted the Protestant world to depart, as He had done the Jews, for He has said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man!" This was an awful thought, and fraught with so much pain and terror, that Geraldine, unable to dwell on it, turned to the Protestant account of the supposed introduction of the doctrine of Transubstantiation to the belief of the Christian world, at a dark and priest-ridden period in the annals of the Church. Cave, the learned author of the "Lives of the Fathers," was great authority; but when Geraldine read his cool assertion, so implicitly believed by the Protestant world, that, in eight hundred and sixty-five, Paschasius Radbert, Abbot of Corbey, first introduced the doctrine of Transubstantiation, she could not help smiling. "No!" cried she, "even my researches have been deep enough to refute this assertion. In eight hundred and sixty-five, the Eastern Churches had separated from the Latin Churches, a lamentable jealousy existed on their side regarding any measures of discipline which they apprehended might be forced on them from Rome, they were in a disposition to reject

every thing thence, and yet we find all these schismatical Churches agreed on this awful point of Faith. We find no council convened to pronounce on the novelties introduced by the Benedictine Monk. His book was combated by Erigena and other Sectarians, just as a treatise on the Holy Trinity would have found an antagonist reply amongst the Arians; but that the work of any individual, however learned or pious, should have changed the faith not only of his own Church but also that of the Greek, Nestorian, Coptic, and Syriac communities, is a stretch of belief quite beyond me, and in fact beyond any one who has become aware of the order and government of the Church respecting any novelties in religion. We find the contrast between the calm approval of Paschasius Radbert's book by the Church, and that stern sentence which fell on Berengarius, in 1050; a sentence revoked in 1055, on his recantation; but, when he began afresh to publish his disbelief in Transubstantiation, a council was held at Rome, to which he was cited, and where he again abjured his opinions, which (like those of Nestorius and Arian in earlier ages) were examined and condemned by the Church."

"No, Mr. Everard," said Geraldine, in reply to her old friend's authoritative enquiry respecting her mornings' studies, "No, I cannot talk with you on this subject of my thoughts. I am so

happy in our many points of agreement, that I will not enter upon the one on which we must part."

"Then I divine it," cried Mr. Everard, and a long pause ensued, during which Geraldine was both pained and encouraged by the long-drawn sigh which from time to time escaped from him. At length he said, "The contradictions involved in the doctrine of the Eucharist is the great stumbling block to us Protestants, who argue *its* impossibility on the ground that even the Deity cannot work that which is mathematically inconsistent—as that two and two should make three—or that a circle should be square.

"But we cannot argue mathematically on a miracle," pleaded Geraldine.

"Well, girl, well, I have thought pretty deeply on this subject; and, supposing the system broached by Bishop Berkeley (known as the Berkleian Philosophy) to be correct, would it not reconcile the apparent contradictions in the belief of Catholics respecting this great mystery of the Holy Eucharist? I have sometimes thought of proposing this as a subject of curious speculation, from which an argument might be drawn thus. The doctrine of immaterialism may be true. If it be true, then there is no contradiction in the Catholic belief: if it be not true, may not the material system be such, though unknown to man, as, when

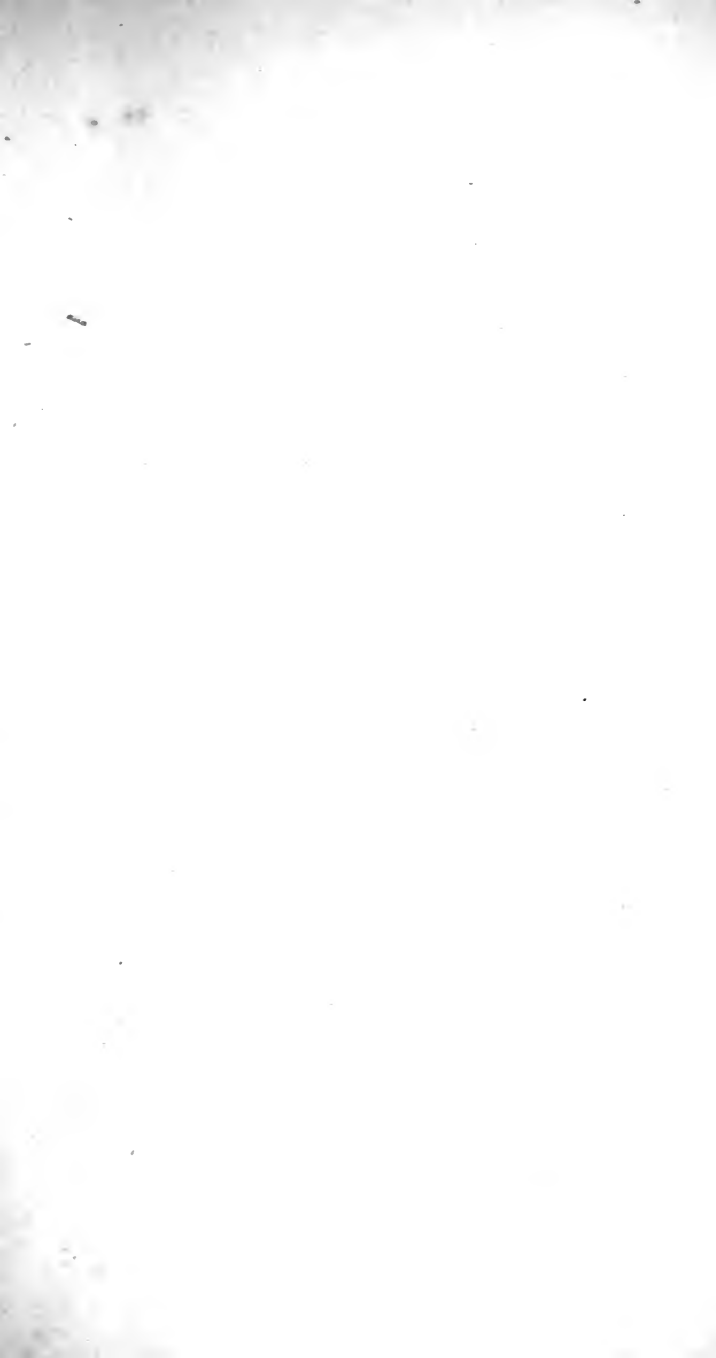
explained and opened to his view, to render the mystery of the Eucharist perfectly clear and comprehensible? Immaterialism was broached by a Protestant bishop, and the belief in it is not considered heterodox either in Catholic or Protestant Churches. The first approaches to it invest it with an air of ridicule; but when Berkeley's ideas are thoroughly investigated, much ingenuity is discovered in the system, and one is led to see, that, if improbable, it is far from impossible. This requires some deep thinking."

* See the Rt. Rev. Dr. Baines's Letter to Archdeacon Moysey.

END OF VOL. I.

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